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ABSTRACT

A program implemented in a school district in central New Jersey was designed to: (1) create at least four magnet school options for elementary school children; (2) reduce the suspension rate at the elementary level; (3) reduce the student referral rate for special education; (4) decrease the number of students requiring basic skills services; and (5) develop a new means of assessing kindergarten students. Over a 10-month period, magnet programs were developed, parents surveyed, and in-service training provided. Programs in science and technology; fine, visual and performing arts; and international studies; and two programs referred to as "Early Childhood" and "An Academy," were developed. Preliminary evaluations of the project showed that its objectives were met. As a result, the project will be expanded to the middle school level. (HOD)

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Developing Schools of Choice to Increase Learning Opportunities for Elementary School Children

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by

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A Practicum II Report presented to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

1992

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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Superintendent of Schools

1755 Amwell Rd. Somerset N.J. 08873

June 23, 1992
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Robert J. Rosado under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Aug. 18, 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

Muriel L. Lundy
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Special thanks is given to my wife and family for their support throughout this practicum. A tremendous debt of gratitude is owed to the teaching staff, principal's and superintendent of schools for making the program work. Finally, thanks to my adviser for her help throughout the practicum.

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ABSTRACT

Elementary School Population. Rosado, Robert J., 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Magnet Schools / School Desegregation / Magnet Schools or School Desegregation / Educational Vouchers / Feeder Patterns / School District Reorganization / Elementary Education / School Choice / Educational Vouchers or School Choice or Feeder Patterns.

This practicum was designed to create schools of choice to increasing learning opportunities for elementary school students. The goals of the program were to, a) create at least four magnet school options for elementary school students, b) reduce the suspension rate at this level, c) reduce the student referral rate for special education, d) decrease the number of students requiring basic skills services and, e) develop a new means of assessing kindergarten students.

The district, with the writer directing program development and implementation, successfully installed a K-6 schools of choice program. Over a ten month period programs were developed, parents surveyed, inservice training was provided and implementation of programs in Science and Technology, Fine, Visual and Performing Arts, Academy, International Studies and Early Childhood was achieved.

The results of the practicum were extremely positive. The five objectives were achieved and the program will be expanded to the middle school for the 1992-93 school year.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The site for this practicum is a public school system located in central New Jersey. The township is the largest in the county covering 46.4 square miles. The school system has a population of 4,450 students and is projected to have an increase in enrollment of approximately 1,000 over the next five years.

There are currently nine schools that house this student population. Seven elementary, one middle, and a senior high school. Through the 1990-91 school year the district remained a fairly traditional school system in respect to program offerings. The new Superintendent of Schools proposed and has begun the planning for a shift to a magnet school system during the 1991-92 school year. During this past September magnet schools were successfully implemented.

The community is culturally, socioeconomically, and racially diverse. The 1980 census showed a population of 31,358 people, comprised of 72% Caucasian, 22% Black, 2% Hispanic, 2% Asian .1% American Indian, and, 1% other racial or ethnic heritage. A 1987 estimate of the township population was given as 38,500. The school systems racial composition is approximately 43% Caucasian, 44% Black, and 13% other ethnic heritages.

The income range for families is from low to upper middle. Approximately 20% of the student population is eligible for free or reduced lunch.

The eight hamlets that form the township vary tremendously in terms of the types of communities they represent. There is a definite urban area on one end of town and as you go northwest across the township the area takes on a totally suburban identity. Lastly, as you continue west there is a section of the township that is farmland and is rural in every sense of the word.

The school system is governed by an elected nine member board of education. They have the charge of appointing a superintendent who is responsible for carrying out all board policies and for the overall operation of the district. He is assisted by two assistant superintendents, a business administrator, eight principals, six directors, and 15 subject supervisors. There are over 400 teachers employed by the district.

The operating budget for each year must be approved by the voters every April. The approved budget for the 1991-92 school year was approximately 48 million dollars.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. This position encompasses supervision of all programs that are curriculum based as

well as planning and implementation of new programs. All of the subject area supervisors meet with the writer, as well as three of the directors, and the eight principals.

All facets of instruction are also supervised by the writer. Frequent observations of all teaching staff are a regular part of monitoring the instructional program. All staff that are eligible for tenure must be formally observed by the writer. All staff inservice, district field trips, conference and travel expenses, and purchase orders come through this office. Additionally, the writer is involved in personnel decisions, facility planning, and budget preparation.

Lastly, the writer directly evaluates supervisors, three directors and contributes to the evaluations of all eight principals.

The writer's educational background includes a bachelors degree with a major in mathematics and a masters degree in education and mathematics. Certifications include teacher of mathematics, bilingual teacher of mathematics, principal and supervisor, and chief school administrator.

Professionally the writer has previously held the positions of teacher of mathematics, elementary mathematics specialist, high school mathematics department chairperson, assistant principal, and principal at the elementary and middle school level. These positions span 17 years in public education.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The township schools are currently divided into K-3 and 4-6 elementary divisions. Public education in the United States is at a crossroads. We can no longer instruct our children with methods that were appropriate for the 1940's. This shop keeper type of education served the country well when there was a overwhelming need for unskilled and semi-skilled blue collar workers. Unfortunately for public education this can no longer be the acceptable mode for educating our students.

Curriculum for the most part has become stagnant and doesn't reflect the needs of our students. Many teachers still utilize a very limited repertoire of pedagogical alternatives. Few activities emphasize higher order thinking skills, problem solving or analysis, and evaluation of materials. Teacher instruction, for the most part, remains in the didactic mode. Small group activities are rare and there is a minimum amount of movement involved in student projects. Often times students sit passively at their desks and only interact with learning situations when called upon. Basal texts rule the curriculum. Recent reports by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics indicate that our students are not performing well in areas of mathematics that emphasize the acquisition of previously mentioned skills.

Students spend very little time in class actually reading and discussing material. A great deal of time is spent on workbook and duplicated sheet activities that are performed in isolation. These activities have little or no connection to the reading material covered in class. In a report from the National Science Board's Commission of Pre-College Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology the following viewpoint was presented:

> Alarming numbers of young Americans are ill-equipped to work in, contribute to, profit from and enjoy our increasingly technological society.
> Too many students emerged from elementary and secondary schools with and inadequate grounding in mathematics, science and technology.
> Many graduates lack sufficient knowledge in acquiring training, skills, and understanding that are needed today and will be even more critically needed in the twenty-first century (p. 6).

These alarming facts have given impetus to a plethora of ideas and strategies to address these concerns. The very make-up of the country shows us that the once prevalent attitude among Americans, that foreign language was not necessary, is no longer acceptable today. Clearly one quarter of our population is Spanish speaking and the number will increase dramatically during the next ten to fifteen years.

We have witnessed a steady decline in the funding for arts education over the past five years. Today's programs tend to be driven by performance initiatives, thereby

restricting student participation and omitting a focus of the aesthetic, interpretive, and critical aspects of art literacy.

We can reasonably expect that the leaders for the year 2000 and the 21st century will need to be prepared for the bold new challenges that have not yet been realized. They will need to be equipped for a world that will become a blend of cultures, rapid technological innovations, and growing social problems.

One of the best encapsulations of the need for change in our public schools comes from the brochure for the Next Century Schools Project Sponsored by RJR Nabisco.

> The next century is just around the corner. It can be an era of unbounded promise and opportunity for all Americans, but only if we take bold action to turn our schools around. As a nation, we have no higher priority than ensuring our children obtain the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking ability essential to their survival in a world of dizzying technological, economic and social change. But today, America's schools are failing our young people and jeopardizing our nation's future. At stake is our nation's ability to compete with the economic powerhouse of Western Europe and Asia, and with it, the quality of life for generations of Americans to come.
>
> America's public schools need a complete revamping, and they need it soon. Fine tuning, tinkering at the margins, doing what we're currently doing only better--these timid strategies aren't a formula for positive change. They're a formula for certain disaster. The hard reality is that radical change is long overdue in our public schools. Conquering persistent problems like tragically high drop-out rates, lagging math and science performance, and abysmal reading and writing skills demands bold and innovative strategies. It's clear that traditional approaches aren't working and that we

> must create fundamentally new learning environments that are more responsive to today's children (p. 3).

What is necessary if public education is to rise above traditional dogma and seek out new and innovative programs that will address the issues facing our children as we approach the 21st century? As we well know these new programs will encounter resistance from all sectors of education. Teachers, parents, and administrators can remain extremely complacent in the face of the overwhelming need to change pedagogy. The writer's district is facing the same issues addressed throughout this section. The solution that was posed was one that created bold new initiatives in programs offered to students and thereby increased, dramatically, the learning opportunities for all children at the elementary school level. These programs addressed the needs of the racially and socio-economically diverse population in the township.

The writer's district implemented a strategy that developed schools of choice to increase learning opportunities for the elementary school children. These programs are geared toward preparing children for the rapidly changing world they will have to live in during the 21st century.

Problem Documentation

The existence of a stagnant and limited choice for program alternatives is evidenced in several areas of

various district reporting mechanisms. The effects of this limited choice shows through in four major areas.

One area that indicates student dissatisfaction with current programs at the elementary level is that of student suspensions.

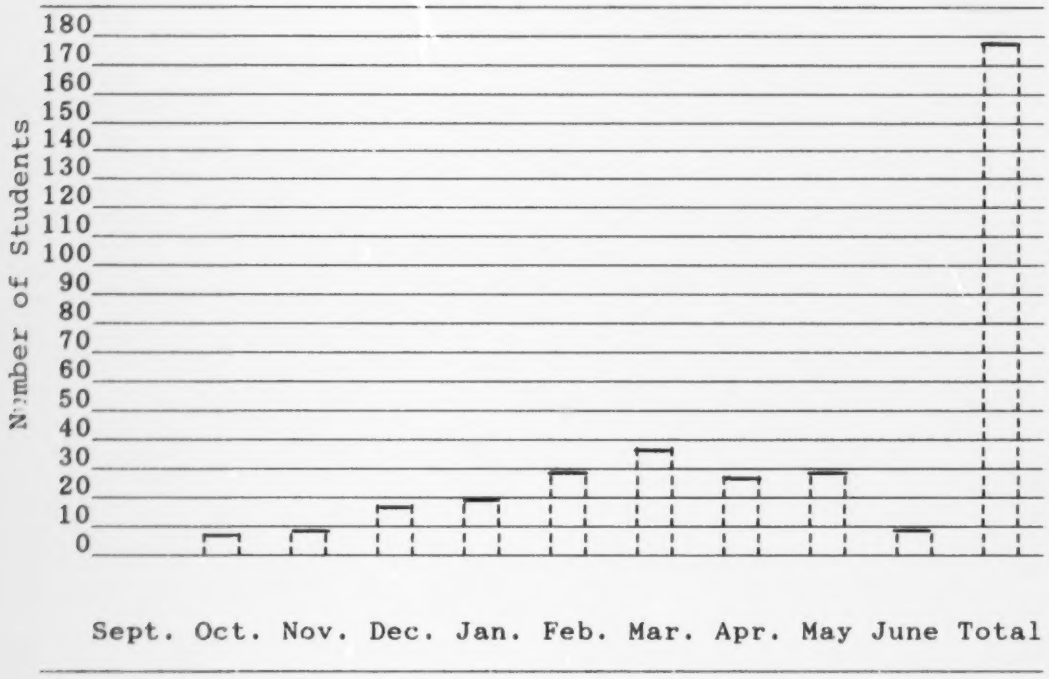
Suspensions are indicators of student unrest and discontent in the current educational environment. The suspension data from the board reports was compiled into a chart by the superintendent of schools for a grant proposal. He used the information as part of a proposal for an intradistrict choice program for the school district. Table one graphically illustrates the suspension increases at the elementary level.

The student population at the 4-6 level has remained stable over the past three years. All except four of the suspensions occurred at the 4-6 level.

At a recent district wide principal's meeting, the problem of a discipline code and the overall rate of suspension for the elementary level were discussed. The K-3 principal's were shocked to find out there had been 177 suspensions in the previous year. Particularly when their records indicated that at the k-3 level there had only been four suspensions. A review of the board suspension information documents that the overwhelming majority of the elementary suspensions come at the 4-6 grade level.

Table 1

Suspensions K-6, 1989-90



The suspension data for the past school year, which was not available when this particum was implemented in June of 1991, indicates a 50 percent decline in the suspensions at the 4-6 level due to the implementation of the writer's Practicum I project. Even with this dramatic decline, there were still almost 90 suspensions at this level this year. An unacceptable amount to say the least. We have also noticed that for the first time the suspensions at the k-3 level have gone from two or three in a year, to over twelve for the period of September through March of the 1990-91 school year.

While many of our programs meet the needs of some of our students, we see that our referrals for special education at the elementary level, as well as district wide, remain high. In fact, the district was unable to meet one of its previous years objectives that was submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education as a result of not being able to decrease the referral rate from one year to the next.

District California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) scores have shown little or no gain over the past five years. In fact, with the exception of the 1989-90 school year, scores have shown a consistent decline from year to year as we follow the same group of students. This information is clearly evidenced in Table 2.

Table 2

Testing

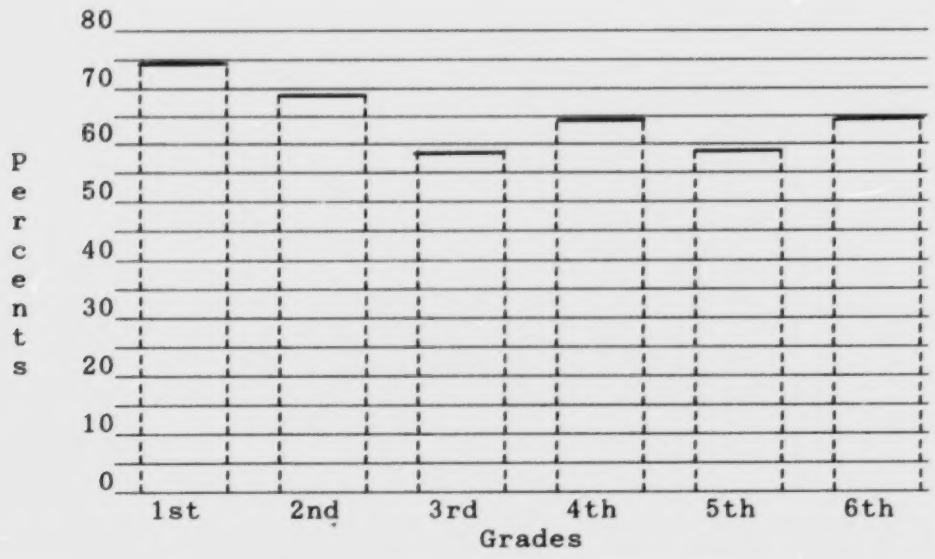
CTBS Mean NCE Scores

	Reading		Mathematics	
	1986	1989	1986	1989
K	60.4	62.8	61.8	63.2
1	57.5	57.0	61.1	59.1
2	62.8	65.7	69.8	72.1
3	60.5	57.7	73.3	68.2
4	64.8	62.8	70.9	69.8
5	62.3	60.0	67.5	70.0
6	62.3	61.1	72.7	74.4

Of particular interest is the number of minority students in remedial programs. While minority students comprise 44% of the general population, they constitute 59% of enrollment in special education, 72% in Extended Day Kindergarten (Chapter I) and a significant number of this population is in the Basic Skills Improvement Program (BSIP) in grades 1-6. Table 3 clearly depicts this information.

Table 3

Minorities in BSIP K - 6



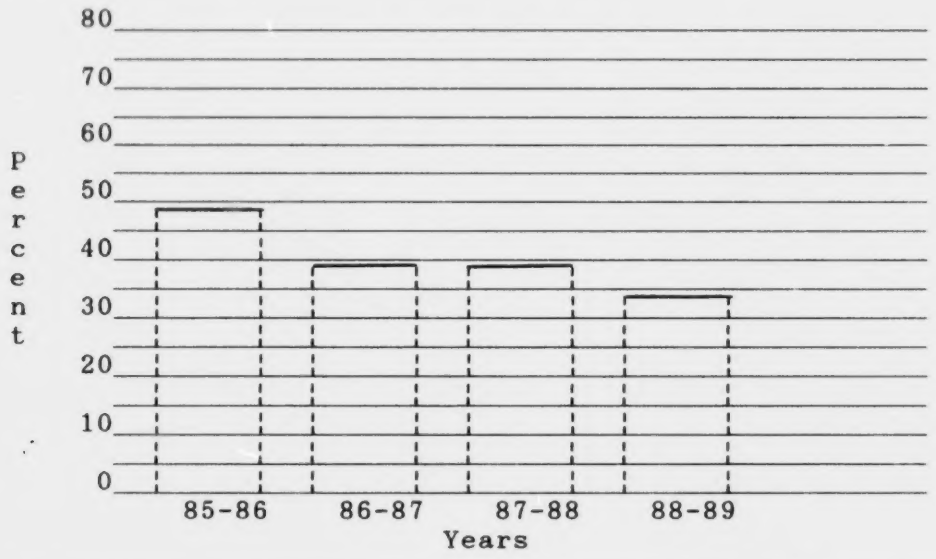
This over representation of minority students in the basic skills program, as well as the total numbers in basic skills, are of particular concern.

An analysis of classroom usage for the district indicates one of every four classrooms in the district are used for a remedial program.

Table 4 clearly illustrates the combined basic skills and special education percentages in the district during a recent four year time period.

Table 4

BSIP - Special Education Enrollment



By the time students reach high school approximately one-third are receiving additional remedial services. In 1988 the Board of Education approved a Community Curriculum Committee with the charge of examining how best to meet the needs of the advanced learner in the district. The committee defined the advanced learner as the student who is doing very well in a particular subject and would benefit from more challenging material.

Almost concurrently with this group, the elementary school program was examined through a review of professional literature and a staff survey through the use of a questionnaire. Additional information regarding the state

of the elementary school program was gathered through interviews with the mathematics and reading directors, gifted and talented teaching staff, and observations by the superintendent.

Causative Analysis

From the preceding section we can see that there are many factors that influence the problem. The best way to indicate the true dimensions of the issue is to summarize the findings of the aforementioned groups. Their responses are as follows:

1. Classroom teaching within the existing programs does not do a good job of stimulating higher level thinking skills,

2. Existing programs (organization and philosophy) permit only horizontal enrichment activities,

3. Present instructional materials are inadequate,

4. Not enough can be done for advanced learners at present and children tend to experience a loss of creativity, are turned off, bored, and behavior problems begin to develop,

5. Math, reading, and special subject areas such as art, music, and computer science were identified as in need of advanced learning opportunities,

6. Additional programs incorporating enrichment, flexibility, creativity, and special teachers are needed.

These recommendations, coupled with instructional concerns raised by teachers, give a clear indication that program options need to be expanded. Instructional concerns identified by staff were: teacher time constraints, materials, staff development inservice, and the lack of time to engage in teacher to teacher discussions. Additional instructional recommendations that came from the teacher problem identification were as follows:

1. A teacher directed curriculum development project, where a core of developers could design and pilot a program and provide inservice to other teachers, would be desirable.

2. Additional resource staff to support, supplement programs, and provide inservice would be beneficial.

3. Additional supplemental materials were necessary.

4. Implement a programatic pretest process to avoid repetition.

5. Utilize instructional aides to provide clerical support.

6. There is a need to create interdisciplinary programs and subject area workshops to enrich core academic areas.

7. Vertical enrichment is lacking and should be addressed.

8. There is a need to develop an identification process to provide appropriate programs and services to students who demonstrate advanced proficiencies in a particular area.

Therefore, as evidenced from all the reasons stated by the various committee's, the district isn't equipped to deal with these issues in its current traditional program mode. The inability to address these issues in the near future will certainly lead to the needs of many students being overlooked. How the district decides to address this plethora of programatic concerns will play a key part in the future success of the district.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The problems discussed are not ones that point to any one particular program mode. There does seem to be an indication that program development can not simply be in the top down mode. The likelihood of developing new programs that address the diverse needs of a student population, such as in the writer's district, are enhanced when bold new initiatives that involve teachers on all levels are attempted.

The writer's review of the literature points to many proactive studies and initiatives that dealt with this type of problem scenario. The studies reviewed indicate that these issues are not unique to the writer's school system. There is documentation from all over the country concerning the issues that must be addressed in the writer's district.

Nathan (1989a) examined school choice in four general areas. He looked at public interest, state and federal responses to interest in choice, new research in this area,

and prospects for expanding state efforts for choice. He sees that a consensus is emerging concerning the desirable features of school choice in restructuring schools. The concept is gaining support from the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. Although there can be problems and there are concerns regarding choice, it has clearly become a movement that is in the forefront of education.

Nathan (1989b) in his review of school choice plans, examined what worked best and what did not in the Minnesota and East Harlem school districts. He found that good school choice programs had three major components going into their successful implementation. One was a clear goal statement for the program. Information and counseling to assist parents in selecting programs for their children was crucial. Lastly, admissions procedures that were established had to be fair and equitable. If these three components were evident, a bold initiative in a district such as East Harlem, were student achievement was very low, could be initiated effectively.

Walberg & Others (1989) examined the massive restructuring process that the Chicago Public Schools undertook in an effort to turn a poorly run and low achieving district around. In this case initiatives occurred on many fronts. School choice and a voucher system were considered, however some fundamental changes were

implemented to effect the entire district structure. The present school board was disbanded, teachers were only to be hired based on merit, and principals were no longer to be granted tenure. Far reaching changes of this kind can only be addressed when a district of this size is not meeting the needs of its student clientele. The movement for this change came from a grassroots, interracial coalition of people across the entire city. We see a radical restructuring of a district can effect all traditional beliefs regarding how a school district should be administered.

Raywid (1987a) took on the task of comparing choice plans to the voucher system initiative. The first involves choice within an existing system, whereas the latter is the model advocated by the federal government, where students can attend schools outside of their district. Her findings indicated that there were many more disadvantages to the voucher system as compared to school choice plans. School choice initiatives were found to enhance teacher quality, student achievement, parent involvement, and the overall perception and confidence the public had in its schools.

Raywid (1987b) examined school restructuring issues from the perspectives of the choice movement and the excellence in schools movement. Although these two orientations appear to be dissimilar at first, she goes on to show how the two can be united by broadening the

definition of excellence. In effect, excellence can then be defined in terms of program excellence within a choice of schools. Creating schools of choice then becomes a way of restructuring schools so that choice becomes a key factor in the pursuit of excellence within a district. Choice becomes the key to addressing the need for change and excellence in this scenario.

Clinchy (1987) discusses how Fall River, Massachusetts addressed the issue of providing an equitable education for the tremendous influx of immigrant children it had been receiving. The second part of the effort was to address the issue of school system-wide improvement that was deemed necessary by a district that saw it was not meeting the needs of its diverse student population. The approach used was to implement controlled choice, which is differs from open enrollment and selection of programs in other choice models. They instituted a magnet school program, controlled admissions and transfers, and developed parent information centers. In this model they addressed the needs of all aspects of the community in terms of program, student needs, and parent information.

Lamm (1987) as part of the National Governors' Association task force on parent involvement and school choice, looked at how effectively our current school structures address the needs of today's students. Upon the completion of this task it was the task forces' opinion that

public education's current structure could not deal effectively with the nation's diversity and the demand for compulsory education. The recommendations from the task force were that states should consider adopting legislation that allows for families, on a statewide basis, to choose schools at all levels for their children. Choice plans that have been implemented to date are across the same district or city.

Wise & Darling-Hammond (1984) examined the issue of creating change through private choice which they made synonymous with they educational voucher strategy. The essence of their examination was the need for solving the effectiveness and efficiency problems in the current educational structure. They saw the creation of private choice vouchers as an effective means of restructuring schools since this system would set up a market accountability scenario that does not exist in education today. They then point out the key roles the state and community had to play in establishing educational goals for a change of this type. Many voucher plans embrace the idea of market accountability.

Boe (1990) reports on a pilot study on school system restructuring that was part of a Pennsylvania's School Performance Incentive Program. The program provided school level incentives as part of an overall entrepreneurial context. The educational restructuring was an

organizational model for an incentive based merit system. The program met two of its three restructuring goals. Annual cash rewards were received for significant educational program improvement. There was a definite improvement of collegial participation. The last goal of improvement of school performance was not achieved. Although this program had merit, it did not address the critical issue of meeting the needs of a diverse student population.

Congress of the U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor (1990) researched letters and statements from administrators and policymakers as well as supplementary materials as part of a hearing on the status and future of American education. Among the areas of concern that were identified by the committee was the school environment, productivity at all levels, and evaluation. The committee decided that areas targeted by the Presidential Educational Agenda should include rewarding successful schools, increasing parent involvement and school choice, and strengthening accountability at all levels. These general issues are part of most plans to restructure schools.

Chubb & Moe (1989), in a comprehensive examination of the school choice movement, found school choice could be a promising approach to school improvement and restructuring for districts that are not meeting the needs of their student population. Choice is supported by the author's

research because it answers many of the questions districts face when considering change. Some of the questions asked are:

1. Is school performance poor enough to justify wholesale change?

2. What have schools done to address troubling trends in student learning?

3. What do other researchers say about student achievement and school performance?

4. What does new research say about student achievement and school performance?

5. How clear is it that effective school organization contributes to increased student achievement?

These are just a sampling of the 21 questions the author's felt schools of choice can address in public education.

Hood (1990) conducted an analysis of spending on education in America to ascertain if increased spending led to improvement in education. In this analysis he found of the 65 studies he examined on the relationship between increased spending and students, only 20 percent found any positive evidence on the impact of spending on learning. Furthermore, 75 percent found no impact and 5 percent had a negative impact due to increased spending.

He also looked at reforms based on the increasing of teacher salaries. He found that 78 percent of these studies found no impact on student performance when you increase

teacher salaries. Lastly, he points out the consistent success noted in any area of structural reform came from districts who either decentralized their districts to increase local control or used a parent choice system for selecting schools.

Hansen (1989) indicates that restructuring American schools has became the leading popular proposal for fixing what everyone perceives is wrong with the nation's schools. The strategies proposed are meant to restructure, not destroy, the historically successful American school system. Fundamental strategies that are proposed are:

1. Restructuring curriculum and instruction by raising the level of state standards, employing the effective schools approaches whenever possible, giving priority to early intervention, implementing technology education, and basic restructuring of the teaching profession.

2. Restructuring the governance and finance of education through legislated accountability, and encouraging school and business partnerships.

3. Restructuring administrative hierarchies and instituting parent choice initiatives to generate competition and encourage excellence.

We can see that his recommendations are far reaching in nature and touch every aspect of education.

Vedder (1988) looked at the issues of productivity, class size, and school choice. As was pointed out in a

previous article, he found that although we are spending more money for education, students continue to score poorly on tests in comparison to other countries. He sees the rise in spending being offset because of a significant decline in the labor productivity of school districts. Class size really has the most effect at the K-3 level. Particularly when it comes to student behavior and attitude. School districts solutions must encourage accountability and create rewards for productivity. He also points out that a choice system, when implemented properly, gives parents alternatives among schools. Schools of choice can meet the goals of cost efficiency and quality. Another option alluded to is that of a decentralized approach to school management.

Nathan (1987a) states, right from the start, that choice is a good idea. He talks about the characteristics of a desirable plan, and then advises parents on how to go about choosing a program for their child. The key to creating schools of choice, from the parent aspect, is providing as much information as possible so the parent becomes an educated consumer. This issue of current and timely parent information is one that is noted throughout the articles that have pointed to schools of choice as a means of improving districts.

Doyle & Finn (1983) proposed a model for choice in public education that differed from the thinking on vouchers

plans during this time period. In their mind you could improve educational quality by building a choice plan on current trends in educational administration. Based on a study of selected California districts they saw regulated competition as a means for providing better education. Additionally, with the focusing of the reform movement at the state level, they saw the local school boards becoming obsolete. Their voucher plan includes weighted vouchers to get disadvantaged students into better schools, parent elected-state regulated boards of trustees to govern schools, school publicity on programs, freedom for each school to set academic and disciplinary standards, transportation credits, and a community option to retain a traditional school district. Although some of these ideas seem inconsistent with later research, they still have several of the themes we have seen throughout much of the latter day research.

Catterall (1984) reviews the voucher plan in a comparative analysis among three existing plans. In his comparisons he points out that sponsors of voucher plans believe choice is a requirement for school improvement. Competition among schools will improve what a school system is capable of delivering. Advocates of voucher plans believe that the plan's simplicity rids the district of complex administrative processes, is fair, and will lead to innovation and diversity of programs within schools. He

also points out that critics feel that schools could lose their core curriculum, that cost could vary greatly, and that bureaucracy could increase through choice. Concerns were also expressed indicating that competition among schools brings the potential for abuse and increased social stratification for students. He concludes that there is still a great deal that has to be examined regarding the successful implementation of a voucher plan.

Rossell (1990) in a related issue, compared the public choice model, which involved parents choosing magnet schools to the command and control model, which uses mandatory assignment of students. The author only looked at the issue of desegregation in the evaluation of the two plans. This work is of great interest for those who wish to restructure their schools through either mode. She found that the public choice model works for school desegregation while the other model produces a great deal of white flight. This last characteristic is one that is feared by racially diverse districts.

Doyle (1989) in his analysis of public education feels the one size fits all public schools that currently exist are a direct outgrowth of the nineteenth century. He points out this rather stagnant system can be changed if parents are given the right to choose the schools their children attend. Research has shown schools of choice improve student attitudes and performance. An additional benefit is

that teachers and administrators will see themselves as true white collar professionals in the long run.

In summary, we see there are many avenues that a school district can pursue when it is considering restructuring its programs to address the needs of a diverse student population. If we examine the key elements in each study, we find many common threads visible and worthy of consideration in dealing with the problem of creating learning opportunities to address the diverse needs of students in today's society.

Teachers, students, parents, and administrators must be offered viable and innovative solutions that will encourage them to develop the best possible programs for students. The concepts for restructuring, presented by these author's, allow for many of the things that are necessary to improve schools and programs. What program or combination of programs will be the most successful? An analysis of successful programs and initiatives will shed some light on possible solution strategies, and ultimately on the solution strategy the writer will propose in chapter four.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The writer's goal for this practicum was to develop schools of choice to increase learning opportunities for elementary school children. The development of these schools will allow for the creation of new programs that address the diverse needs of the student population.

The teachers, administrators, and parents in the district were limited to one traditional program option when they are faced with many children who do not fit the one size fits all education system that currently exists. The writer's district has addressed this concern through the choice program.

This program targeted specific problems that have been identified in the previous chapter. Specifically, the expectations for this practicum addressed the need to create magnet options that will address the needs of the student population. It is expected these programs have addressed the area of special education classifications and reduced this number. The program also addressed the concern regarding the number of basic skills students at the elementary level. It was expected that we will see a reduction in this number.

Additionally, the program did have an impact on the disaffected student population, and as a result we should see a reduction in the number of students suspended as

compared to the traditional program students. Lastly, it was expected that through the implementation of this program, teachers would develop additional ways of assessing student progress. This in turn will impact on the way students were graded in a particular area.

Teachers and parents saw that when children have more than one choice of program their opportunity to become a successful student will be enhanced. Administrator's will now have several program options to recommend for children who are not currently experiencing success in a program.

The success of these programs was measured by the performance and measurement objectives employed during the implementation period of this practicum.

Performance Objectives

The following objectives are an integral part of this practicum:

Objective 1: During the implementation period teachers created program options for the implementation of a schools of choice or magnet school system as measured by the student selection numbers at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year.

Objective 2: During the implementation period the students in the magnet programs exhibited increased interest in school, and thereby reduced the number of students who were suspended by 5%, as measured by a comparison of suspension data.

Objective 3: During the implementation period teachers developed an alternative means of assessing student progress as measured by recommendations for a change in current assessment practices or grading procedures in any of the magnet programs.

Objective 4: During the implementation period students experienceed increased academic success as measured by a comparison of the number of children in need of remedial services before entrance into the program compared to after entrance into the program.

Objective 5: During the implementation period the referral rate for students for special education services decreased, due to the development of magnet programs that addressd their needs, as measured by a comparison of the referral rate of magnet programs to the previous years traditional program.

Measurement of Objectives

Objective one was measured by the number of students who selected specifically identified magnet programs by September of the 1991-92 school year.

Objective two was measured by a comparison of the suspension data from children in magnet programs versus children in a traditional program.

Objective three was measured by the recommendation of a new means of assessment by staff or a recommendation by staff to change an existing grading procedure.

Objective four was measured by a comparison of the number of students receiving basic skills services when they entered the program versus the number who are still in the program after examining the spring test data which determines basic skills program placement of students.

Objective five was measured by a comparison of the referral rate for special education at the end of practicum implementation in magnet programs versus the previous years referral rate for the traditional program.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The literature indicates there is no one best way to develop programs to increase learning opportunities for elementary school children. The literature clearly indicates there are many approaches that have enjoyed varying degrees of success. In fact, many successful programs which contain similar and original ways to address these issues have been in operation for a number of years.

Rossell & Glenn (1988) took a hard look at the outcomes of magnet schools and the parent choice issue as it pertained to the schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Prior to the implementation of magnet schools, Cambridge used a plan that stressed mandatory reassignment of students to increase interracial exposure. This plan was wrought with problems and did little to improve the schools. Their analysis indicates once magnet schools were implemented there were positive benefits. There was greater interracial exposure than under the previous plan when parents had no options from which to choose. Additionally, they also noted student achievement increased as a result of magnet school programs. It seems this system addressed the needs of the population more so than the previously existing traditional program.

Nathan (1987b) reviewed current efforts to afford parents and students with schools of choice. In his

examination of these efforts he reviews what the research on choice points to as reasons for implementing this type of program. The benefits derived from the advent of a choice system included a reduction in the dropout rate, an increase in student achievement, greater parental involvement, improved racial interaction, and improved morale among the professional staff. He highlights all of these as he outlines the features he feels are necessary in the development of a successful choice plan. We see that choice addresses many of the issues that are at the forefront of public education.

Nathan (1987c) examined three existing choice plans in addressing the issue of why it is necessary to expand choice in public schools. He found in three school systems that magnet programs or schools led to many positive results. Student achievement improved and he noted these types of programs allowed for more opportunities for creativity among staff. Teachers were thrust into the role of decision makers and as a result this expanded their opportunity for professional growth. This combination of positive aspects within the school community is at the foundation of his argument to expand public choice.

Charpentier (1985) describes in glowing terms, how a parent council in conjunction with a group of district administrators collaborated in the development and implementation of a city wide magnet school desegregation

plan. The city and school district in question were in Worcester, Massachusetts. The entire community moved to magnet schools with the specific intent of increasing parent choice and introducing competition among public schools, as a result of the implementation of the program. Lastly, the group felt this was the one way the district could achieve the goal of academic excellence for all of its students.

Raywid (1984), who has become a nationally renowned expert on magnet schools and schools of choice, reviewed the research on alternative schools that came under the heading of schools of choice. The research revealed that districts that implemented choice plans enjoyed improved student attendance, a more positive attitude among students, a higher level of involvement on the part of parents and students, and a higher educational quality within the schools. Lastly, she points out, these district also experienced an increase in academic achievement. This message came through clearly when this author spoke in the writer's district regarding the choice issue. She pointed out that, at the heart of the reform movement in public education, magnet schools offered the greatest opportunities for students, staff, and parents.

Dallas Schools (1990) in their research report present the components and goals of the Dallas educational equity plan. This plan addressed the issues of creating a desegregation alternative while keeping educational equity a

priority. In this plan of choice and equity, the two most consistent problems found were the recruitment of minority staff and getting non-minority students to attend schools in predominantly minority areas. The major focus of this plan was the implementation of a controlled choice policy, which involved special K-6 learning centers. In reviewing the success of the Pearl C. Anderson Learning Center it was noted that the success of the school stemmed from its creation of special programs that developed a shared sense of organizational purpose. The program placed a focus on positive individual experiences, enhancement of student achievement in traditional and nontraditional subjects, and increasing parent involvement and participation. They concluded they were able to decrease the disparity in minority versus non-minority student achievement through this system. The report indicates educational equity does seems to be attainable.

Wells (1990) in her research, examined the issues and concerns surrounding choice programs. She found existing choice plans vary dramatically in their configurations as well as their purpose. Different plans were found to have different effects, particularly on low-income and minority group students. She felt it still was not completely clear on how a district should go about structuring a choice program to assure that students with the fewest resources would not be shut out of the best schools. Choice plans

have a great deal of political appeal because low-income and minority families can avoid substandard schools, free market principals become the norm, parent choice allows for more control by parents, and the solution is one that is viewed as low cost. Additionally, parent involvement increases and pupil needs are addressed more effectively through the various program options.

Lastly, she points out, choice plans come in a variety of structures. There are controlled choice plans, magnet schools, interdistrict, and open enrollment plans. The key components for an initial implementation are a clear goal statement, counseling and parent outreach activities, a fair and equitable admissions procedure, and provisions for transportation. Obviously, choice seems to be effective in more than one form based on this author's research.

Massachusetts State Department of Education (1990) evaluated the controlled choice plan that was implemented in the Boston Public Schools. The evaluation of this first year elementary program found little had been accomplished in planning for improvement of programs. It was noted that future compliance for desegregation would need to empower administrators, teachers, and advisory councils. The plan itself, did include the development of school improvement councils. The new assignment process, under controlled choice, did not resegregate the schools as had been feared. The problems that led to confusion have been the districts

inability to link parent choice with school level improvement plans. These problems, however, were related to the delays in decision-making by the superintendent and the board of education. An additional problem was the lack of definition regarding what each zone superintendent within the system was allowed to decide. The program itself was still considered successful in its first year despite the administrative problems. The program initiatives were successfully implemented. Once again we see the need for good communication with all aspects of the community when you implement a major reform of this type.

Domanico (1989) detailed the organizational structure and the accomplishments of the choice program in District 4 in East Harlem, New York in his work for the Manhattan Institute. The children in this district select various magnet programs once parents have been informed of the choices that are open to them. Curriculum offerings in each program are developed around a central theme. The district used reading achievement as a barometer in measuring student success. In 1974, before program implementation, the district scores ranked at the lowest level in the city out of approximately 32 community districts. By 1982, the achievement level had moved to the middle of all district scores. Other indications of success were dramatic improvement in district math scores and placement of students into selective or private high schools. The

Institute concludes that the East Harlem model offers clear lessons for implementation of magnet programs in larger American cities. The magnet schools in this district seem to have achieved success on many levels.

Institute for Independent Education (1989) conducted a review of the magnet school programs that were set up in the Chicago Public Schools. The programs were designed with the intent of creating opportunities for equity in education and the need for parents to have greater choice among schools. They considered whether the schools fulfilled the promise of higher achievement and desegregation. The data they examined from the 35 magnet sites indicated the programs were successful in other areas aside from the goals they initially sought to achieve. Their conclusions were that it would be more beneficial for the district to turn most of the schools into magnets. Additionally, it was felt in doing this you could expand the universal quality of most of the schools. The combination of magnet programs coupled with the interest of the private sector, and initiatives they could provide, would allow the system to remain at the cutting edge in education. Private sector interest in today's world of education seems to increase as districts attempt bold new initiatives.

Easton & Bennett (1989) also examined another initiative for change that was implemented in the Chicago Public Schools. A voluntary transfer program that allowed

minority students to leave 14 predominantly minority populated schools was examined. Data was collected on the students who left these schools for other schools or special programs. The author found a majority of the students who left were female and the standardized scores for all students who left were significantly higher than those who remained. As a result, schools which did not have special programs were of no particular interest to other students. Overall scores declined in these sending schools as these more able students left these programs. An additional side effect generated was that these schools began to experience morale problems among the staff. Staff felt an unfair two tier system now existed which cast the have not schools in an unfavorable light. This would certainly seem to lend support to the previous studies recommendations that all schools should begin to develop specialized programs.

Raywid (1989), in her review of choice studies and programs for school choice, examined the major strands of evidence available for these types of programs. She points out much of the research is correlational in nature. However, she indicates that in her focus on studies involving 139 magnet schools in 11 cities, she found some very supportive data. On the basis of achievement, as measure by standardized testing instruments, schools of choice were very successful. Another aspect to examine was that of student attitudes toward school, teachers, and

education in general. In annual evaluations conducted by the Los Angeles magnet programs they found students' attitudes were more positive than those of the majority of the nation's students in the same grade level. This was evidenced in each of the three consecutive school years it was measured. These schools also enjoyed improved student behavior. These gains in attitude and behavior were evidenced in schools, even if the academic aspect of the program was not as successful. Vandalism rates were lower in these schools when compared to other schools in their community. Student attendance improved in each of the magnet programs. Lastly, teacher satisfaction and morale increased a result of the staff's investment in the success of these programs. Magnet school programs, when properly designed, seem to have far reaching effects on all aspects of the school community.

Soloman & Wroblewski (1989) took an interesting approach to the examination of magnet school success. They looked at student attitudes toward science in magnet schools that placed an emphasis on this subject. The study involved 358 elementary school students. Approximately half were in a science magnet program and half were not. The instrument used to measure their attitudes was derived from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Their findings indicated students enrolled in the science magnet schools were more likely to identify science as their favorite or

second favorite subject. While you might expect to see this finding, it does indicate that magnet school programs, in particular subject specific areas, do attract students for programatic reasons.

Dade County Public Schools (1984) utilized a student transfer option of racial majority to racial minority schools, to provide additional choices for students. The study was conducted to determine why large numbers of Black students were using this option. A majority of the students interview indicated they transferred because they perceived the new schools to be better. However, better did not necessarily imply academic concerns. Better meant there was less fighting, greater concern by school officials for their well-being, better facilities, books to take home, and a majority Caucasian student body. The perception of a school and its programs seems to be the reality as far as these students were concerned. We can infer from this that students prefer an environment where they feel wanted and where they feel safe.

Bolanos (1990) investigated the success of the Key School in Indianapolis, Indiana. This magnet school had received national attention because the nature of the program called for extensive collaboration among all elements of the community in designing its curriculum. She found the program allowed for interdisciplinary curriculum development and the formation of alternative means of

assessing student progress. The program was designed around central curricular themes which were continuously being revised and refined by the various interacting groups. This type of collaboration seems to be typical of most successful magnet programs.

Echols (1986) examined the success and continuing popularity of the Buffalo, New York magnet school programs. The unparalleled success of these programs generated many positive results. The programs were found to provide equity in programs for both minority and non-minority students. The schools were successful in attracting integrated student bodies and offered highly innovative educational programing and curriculum to meet the diverse needs of the student population. Lastly, the magnet programs provided parents and teachers with a major role in the development and ongoing refinement of each program.

Educational Testing Service (ETS, 1990) conducted a study of the choice program in the Montclair Public Schools, Montclair, New Jersey. The writer had first hand experience with this very successful magnet school program as an administrator in the district for eight years. In their analysis of the schools ETS found the magnet model had done an excellent job in providing quality programs in all of its schools. They felt magnet schools were at least partially responsible for the increase in standardized test scores across the district. They did note there was still a gap in

the achievement rates of minority versus non-minority students. The researchers found a favorable school climate was evidenced throughout the district. Administrators and teachers were found to be extremely supportive of the school's goals. Teachers indicated the main advantages of the program were the choices it offered and the way the diversity of programs offered addressed the needs of the students. All schools initially did not share a common core curriculum. In 1985, however, the district underwent a comprehensive curriculum revision to standardize the core curriculum in all of its schools. Research also indicated the success of Montclair's plan can be traced to the initial involvement of the community in the planning of the magnet programs. The strategic placement of attractive programs in minority areas was a key reason for the achievement of equity in programing in all schools.

Doyle & Levine (1983), in their extensive examination of magnet schools across the country, as well as their historical perspective in examining these programs, uncovered a great deal of information on magnet programs. Their work summarized the information available at that time on magnet school programs. At the time of their work there was not quite as much research on magnet schools as there is today. They did find magnet schools tended to achieve their objectives with a high degree of success. Schools of choice improved racial climate and integration. The level of

improvement, as measured by student performance, was in many cases extremely high and allowed the schools to continually address issues involving pedagogy and instruction. They found morale was higher in these schools, the discipline problems decreased, and they could conclude magnet schools are an effective strategy for school reform. Their final recommendations include a proposal that the federal government support a large-scale magnet school demonstration program.

MAGI Educational Services (1985) conducted an in depth research study on New York State Magnet Schools. The purpose of the study was to determine whether magnet schools provide a quality education and promote desegregation. The study found magnet schools were consistently able to produce positive results in the areas of student achievement, encouraging students to become more interested in learning, providing a rich and diverse curriculum, creating high parent participation, high levels of communication in the community, and promoting a positive school climate. Magnet programs in New York receive a great deal of financial support from the state government. As a result, you have an area were a great deal of information can be gathered regarding the progress and success of magnet programs. The 41 magnet schools that were involved in this study were scattered throughout the state of New York. They were located in cities of all different sizes. Clearly, this

report indicates magnet programs can be a successful way to meet the diverse educational needs of today's students and can be a very powerful vehicle for educational reform..

Description of Solution Selected

It appears there are many approaches to improving schools and addressing the diverse needs of our student's in the 1990's. School reform and accountability are the watchwords for the future. The writer's review has examined schools of choice, voluntary desegregation plans, voucher systems, controlled choice plans, and various combinations of each. Magnet schools, through the schools of choice initiative, seem to hold the most promise for successfully addressing the needs of a diverse student population (MAGI, 1985, Doyle & Levine, 1983, ETS, 1990).

Magnet programs address the issues the writer has raised in this practicum. Meeting the diverse needs of the student population, creating learning opportunities for students with diverse interests, decreasing student dissatisfaction which in turn can lead to improved academic and social performance are all areas that magnet school programs address (Dallas Schools, 1990, Raywid, 1989).

The benefits of this type of reform seem to outweigh any negative aspects associated with most of the programs examined. The approach that the writer's district followed was effective because it was one in which you developed a choice plan by providing as much information to the

community as possible and allowed students to attend schools based on parent choice and student interest. This combination seems to be the one that enjoyed the most success in the literature (Domanico, 1989).

By creating elementary school programs that develop learning alternatives for students, you gain benefits for students, but you also have the carry over affect of improving school climate and teacher morale (Raywid, 1989, MAGI, 1985). If all aspects of the school community develop a vested interest in the success of the school programs, this seems to enhance the quality of school life substantially.

Initially, the writer worked with the coordinating committee's to set up a Magnet Fair that gave parents the best possible information to make selections for a new magnet program. The programs offered were Fine, Visual and Performing Arts, Early Childhood, Science and Technology, International Studies, and an Academy. Due to the overwhelming response to the program, all five magnet choices were implemented in September.

After the magnet fair the writer began to develop inservice training, program options, equipment recommendations, and continually worked with all district administrators to insure the successful implementation of the magnet programs in September. It was, and still is, the writer's responsibility to work on the ongoing program

development component associated with the schools of choice initiative, throughout the summer months, and over the next few school years. The writer met with each program development team to finalize all program initiatives during the summer. The writer and staff developed year-round inservice training opportunities that were a critical part of continued program success. To achieve the objective of creating an alternative means of assessment, the writer and a district testing committee proposed changes in the district testing procedure that allowed one program committee to work with the writer on the development of an option for assessing students that did not previously exist. The writer met monthly with all building principals, program supervisors, and program development committee's, in an ongoing effort to continually refine and enhance each magnet program.

The writer worked with the superintendent of schools to develop appropriate staffing levels for specialists in each program. Additionally, the writer worked with the superintendent and building principals to create innovative scheduling of program options for each magnet school. Lastly, the writer continually monitored all aspects of the program as they related to the practicum objectives.

Report of Action Taken

The solution strategies for this practicum were implemented during the month of June at the end of the

1990-91 school year. The practicum was completed on April 16, 1992 which coincided with the end of spring testing. The duration of the practicum was 10 months. The actions taken are described on a monthly basis as follows.

Month 1 - Through established registration procedures we identified final numbers of students for each magnet program. Over 98% of the students received their first choice in program. Due to the overwhelming number of parents who chose Science and Technology at the K-3 level, the writer and superintendent informed the board this program would be expanded to a second school. This accounted for the high rate of first choice approval. Parents not receiving their first choice were in the group who selected the Academy or International Studies programs as their first choice at the K-3 level. Since less than 15 selected each program, it was not economically feasible to offer these two programs for the opening of school.

The writer met with coordinating teams to provide inservice training opportunities that addressed both immediate and long range needs of each magnet program. During this month, the writer and the superintendent met with building principals to finalize all equipment needs, facility modifications, and program schedules. Lastly, we met with principals to finalize all remaining aspects of program implementation prior to the opening of school.

Month 2 - Data was collected on students currently enrolled in the program. Data collected indicated the current number of students in the program who were receiving basic skills services. Additional data was collected on the number of special education referrals made in the first eight months of the previous school year and the number of suspensions in the first eight months of the previous year. Because the suspensions were significantly lowered due to the writer's practicum one project during the prior school year, information on suspensions will also include data from the 1989-90 school year.

The practicum one project was not continued in the 1991-92 school year, with the implementation of the school's of choice program. Magnet programs, which would increase student interest, were postulated as being able to keep the suspension rate down compared to no prior treatment. The writer will still make a comparison to the practicum one year to see if magnets were more effective in lowering suspensions than the practicum one project. Lastly, we finalized staff inservice schedules for the school year.

Month 3 - The writer, with the director of reading, began to examine alternative means for assessing students in kindergarten. Discussion also began on the impact of changing assessment as it related to the district report cards at the K-6 level. We continued ongoing staff inservice components for all magnet programs. The writer

met with principals to determine if any new needs had arisen in this area. The writer also met with the special education and basic skills directors to check on any new students added to their respective programs.

Month 4 - The writer began regular visitations to the schools to monitor program implementation and continued to work with staff regarding inservice programs. Meetings continued with the reading director and the director of guidance and testing to determine the best methods for developing the new assessment program for kindergarten students. The midpoint progress report was pushed back to month five, with the practicum extension of an additional two months, to coincide with the end of spring testing. Information on the number of student referrals for special education was checked and the same task was completed for suspension data. The writer received final numbers for students in the basic skills program as a part of the end of practicum evaluation. Regular visits to monitor program implementation were continued.

Month 5 - Meetings with principals and supervisors continued. These discussions were used to assess the direction and development of each program. We determined if there were any new program needs or curriculum initiatives that should be addressed for the remaining months of practicum implementation.

The writer determined that the early childhood committee and the kindergarten teachers, under the direction of the reading director and the writer, would begin working on the creation or the selection of methods for alternative means of assessment of kindergarten students. There was a great deal of interest in this task. Eleven teachers volunteered their time after school, over several months, to work on this task. This was one of many instances where teachers worked without compensation to accomplish a task. Regular visits to monitor program implementation continued.

Month 6 - The writer continued ongoing inservice with all staff. He met with principals and supervisors to assess staff needs and determine if any changes or modifications were necessary in curriculum planning or inservice training. He continued meetings for the selection of a new assessment instrument and resulting standards for evaluation of student progress. Regular visits to monitor program implementation were continued, this included meeting with classroom teachers and program specialists. Updated lists of referrals and suspended students were collected.

Month 7 - Meetings with principals and supervisors, to assess staff needs and determine if any changes or modifications were necessary in curriculum planning or inservice training continued. As a result of these meetings, an additional follow-up session for technology training was scheduled for January. Data collection and

information on students was gathered to prepare for the spring testing program. The writer determined that the dissemination of procedures, for end of practicum data collection, would occur at a later data with the practicum extension for the additional two months. The assessment committee brought closure to the selection of evaluation procedures and changes necessary for the new assessment methods.

Month 8 - Dissemination of information regarding practicum ending procedures occurred. The assessment committee determined that a one on one assessment instrument should be used for kindergarten testing. They developed criteria for this assessment and spent this month on determining the necessity for developing the instrument, versus examining the latest commercially developed instruments. They determined that one company did have a product that could be adapted to meet the needs of the students as per the committee's criteria.

As a result, the writer arranged for the training of thirty teachers, who were all involved with the one on one assessment of every kindergarten student in the district. Training was also provided to bilingual staff so that Spanish speaking students could be administered the assessment in their native language. Updating of data available on suspensions and special education referrals was accomplished. The writer prepared lists to match scores of

basic skills students with new test information that arrived one month after practicum implementation was completed.

Month 9 - During this month training for the kindergarten assessment occurred. The writer was also involved in developing a second round of training for staff that will occur after practicum implementation is complete. Testing materials for district testing were distributed and a due date for final data collection was established. Monitoring of each magnet program continued with the regular visitation schedule. Meetings with principals were arranged to review testing procedures, the new assessment process, and report card recommendations that grew out of the assessment committees findings.

Month 10 - Spring testing was completed during this month. These data were returned to the district in one month and the analysis of the number of basic skills students in the program occurred. All final data on suspension and referrals for special education were collected by the writer.

In the final chapter of this practicum report the writer has reviewed the results of his work to determine the achievement of the practicum objectives.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The goal of the writer's practicum was to develop schools of choice to increase learning opportunities for elementary school children. The program was designed to create programs that would be of high interest and allow for greater parent involvement. The school district had been in a traditional mode throughout its history, experienced a great deal of parent dissatisfaction, and a decline in student achievement, over the past ten years.

Students who traditionally attended schools based on attendance areas, were now given the opportunity to attend one of five magnet programs. The choice of program was not restricted to attendance area and selection of a program was based on interest. From the initial registration process through the implementation of programs in September, a tremendous amount of interest was generated in the public schools. This was evidenced by an increase of over 150 students registering for school in grades K-6 over the prior years projections. A large number of these students were in kindergarten and first grade. Grade one experienced an increase in student enrollment of 87 students over the prior year. This reversed a district trend which saw kindergarten and first grade enrollment declining each year, as students who attended kindergarten left to attend private school.

With the implementation of the magnet programs, parents left private schools in the area to come back to public school for the first time in over fifteen years. The articles in the appendix of this report demonstrate the tremendous interest and success of the magnet programs during the initial implementation period (see the Appendix).

Specific objectives of this program were designed to achieve the overall goals of this practicum. The following information deals directly with each objective outlined, including the results achieved.

Objective 1: During the implementation period the teachers will create program options for the implementation of a schools of choice or magnet school system as measured by the student selection numbers at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year.

Five magnet programs were offered for the 1991-92 school year. Table 5 indicates the enrollment in the program in September, 1991.

Table 5

Program Enrollment

Early Childhood, K-2	= 456
Fine, Visual & Preforming Arts, 1-3	= 322
Science & Technology, 1-3	= 414
Academy, 3-6	= 131
Fine, Visual & Performing Arts, 4-6	= 320
International Studies, 4-6	= 70
Science & Technology, 4-6	= 490
Traditional, K-6	= 346
Total	= 2549

The enrollments in this chart clearly indicate parents were very receptive to the schools of choice initiative. Over 80% of the students, at the K-6 level selected a magnet program. The traditional program was left as an option for those parents who did not wish to participate in a magnet program.

Parents who choose to remain in traditional program did so for several reasons, however a majority fell into one of two categories. They stayed in the traditional program because they felt that was the proper program for their child. The second motive was analogous to people who do not want to buy a car the first year it is on the market. This group took a wait and see approach. They wanted to wait a year, just in case there were any "bugs to work out". This group is now requesting magnet program placement for the 1992-93 school year. Early registration for kindergarten

for the 1992-93 school year also indicates a 50% drop in parents choosing the traditional kindergarten program versus the early childhood kindergarten program.

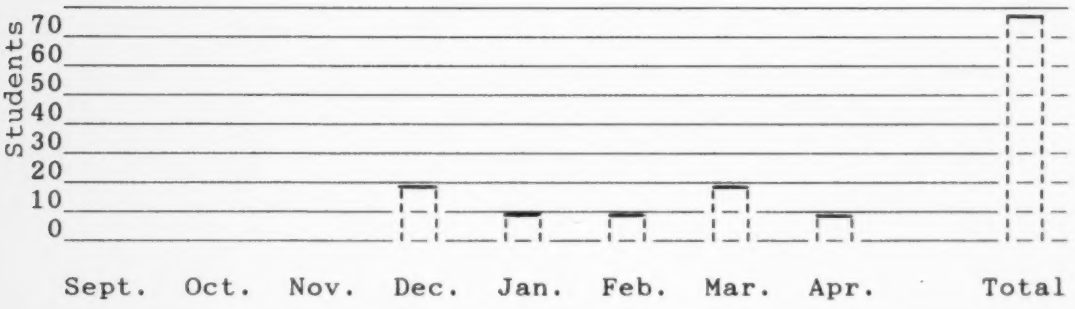
Based on the enrollment figures presented, and as indicated by the articles in the appendices, this objective was successfully accomplished. The creation of these magnet programs has generated unparalleled parent involvement and enthusiasm. Feedback at public board meetings has taken a positive slant. The district will continue to expand and refine the existing magnet programs for the 1992-93 school year. Additionally, because of this success, these programs will be expanded into the middle school for the 1992-93 school year and to the high school for the 1993-94 school year.

Objective 2: - During the implementation period the students in the magnet programs will exhibit increased interest in school, and thereby reduce the number of students suspended by 5%, as measured by a comparison of suspension data.

Suspension data for the months of September through April are depicted below:

Table 6

Suspensions K-6, 1991-92



The suspension data to this point in the school year indicates there is a 43% decline in suspension compared to the 1989-90 figures. This figures represents the true measure of difference since the writer's practicum one project was responsible for a large decrease in suspensions in the 1990-91 school year. The writer's practicum one project accounted for approximately the same dramatic difference in the suspension figures versus the 1989-90 results. It is interesting to note that the absence of the counseling program from the practicum one project has been offset by the implementation of the magnet school program.

We should also note there is the possibility of a carryover effect from the practicum one project, however

this might have been more than offset by a decrease in administrative staff in the school with the highest suspension rate.

An interesting comparison that can be made here is to compare suspensions from the practicum one project versus those in the practicum two. Obviously, the practicum two project has several areas of focus and the practicum one project was geared to just one area, however, the comparisons are still of interest. The number of suspensions, K-6 in the first eights months of the 1990-91 school year was 66. During the first eight months of the 1991-92 school year, there were 73 suspensions.

Although this shows a slight increase when comparing the two practicum years, a school by school analysis yields some interesting information. Six of the seven elementary schools show a decrease in suspensions from the prior year. With the most dramatic decrease in one school that suspended 20 students in the prior school year and only 3 this year. One school of the seven experienced a dramatic increase of 33 suspensions. In fact, without this school the suspension rate dropped further in the practicum two year than the practicum one year. The school with the increase experienced a reduction of administrative staff and this seems to have played a factor in the rate. It is the largest elementary school in the district and student

supervision must be examined more closely for the upcoming school year.

However, the comparison of data clearly indicates that the schools of choice initiative dramatically reduced the suspension rates compared to the last non-practicum year. Surely, well beyond the 5% level of the objective. Furthermore, an additional reduction of five percent or more was experienced in six of seven elementary schools in a comparison of the two practicum years.

Objective 3: During the implementation period teachers will develop an alternative means of assessing student progress as measured by recommendations for a change in current assessment practices or grading procedures in any of the magnet programs.

As detailed in the report of action taken, the process for examining a new assessment instrument began with the formation of a committee, that consisted of teachers, the director of reading, and the writer. The first few meetings centered on a discussion of the general standardized paper and pencil test that had been used in years past. Teachers felt the mass testing of students with a paper and pencil instrument was not providing the child with the opportunity to perform at an optimal level.

After two or three meetings, the committee decided the best approach would be to either develop or adapt an instrument that would allow for one on one testing of

students. Although the process might be more time consuming, the committee felt the information gained with a one to one test would be far more valuable. Particularly, with the test administrator having the ability to write down pertinent information regarding each child's response, whenever it was appropriate.

After an initial attempt to design an instrument, the committee decided it would be more expedient to contact existing test manufacturers to see if any had developed a test battery that would meet the committees criteria. Several presentations were made. Finally one company was able to present an instrument that not only satisfied the one to one requirement, but also allowed for teacher commentary, and for flexibility in the number of items given. In this way the district could decide how many items should be given, and in what areas the students would be tested.

The next major challenge was to mobilize the manpower to test 400 kindergarten students in a weeks time. All committee members agreed to undergo the training and additional staff were identified to participate in the training. Over thirty staff members were trained for the testing program. The first one on one assessment in the districts history was successfully administered during the week of April 6, 1992.

An off shoot of this committee's deliberations involved the discussion of the current report card system. As a result of their initial discussion, the committee also took on the task of recommending a change to a total narrative instrument for the following school year. It should be noted this entire process was accomplished without an additional stipend for staff. The motivation for their work came from their ability to produce change in district policy and procedures. This kept the group functioning at a high level. The only compensation received for this process was for the training they received to administer the new assessment instrument. Not only was this objective successfully achieved, it also clearly demonstrated that empowerment of staff for the improvement of education can be gained through innovative educational initiatives.

Objective 4: During the implementation period students will experience increased academic success as measured by a comparison of the number of children in need of remedial services before entrance into the program compared to after entrance into the program.

The following table summarizes the number of students receiving remedial services during the 1990-91 school year versus the 1991-92 school year:

Table 7

Students Receiving Remedial Services

	Sept.91	April 92
Grade 1	93	77
Grade 2	56	70
Grade 3	60	57
Grade 4	51	39
Grade 5	53	58
Grade 6	58	41
Total	371	342

The September numbers are a result of the prior years testing and represent an unduplicated count. The April figures are a reflection of the April testing results and represent an unduplicated count. The decrease in the total number of students represents a decline of 8% in students requiring basic skills, district wide, for the upcoming school year. This surpasses the goal of 5% set by the writer for this practicum.

However, this number is even more impressive in light of some other factors. First, the district changed to a new standardized testing instrument for this school year which was far more rigorous than the one used in the prior school year. Therefore, when you examine these scores after they are converted for comparison to last years, while leaving the cutoff score at the same level, the decrease is over 10%. What makes these results even more impressive is that 15% of the students, who are in the original 371, came to

the district within the last school year. The result is significant for the district in light of the many other positive aspects of the schools of choice initiative.

Objective 5: During the implementation period the referral rate for students for special education services will decrease, due to the development of magnet programs that will address their needs, as measured by a comparison of the referral rate of magnet programs to the previous years traditional program.

Nowhere was the success of the schools of choice program more apparent than in this area. The following table details a comparison of the referral rate over the past two years:

Table 8

Referrals for Special Education, Grades K-6 1990-91

	1990-91	1991-92
Sept.	1	2
Oct.	5	4
Nov.	21	6
Dec.	13	14
Jan.	12	17
Feb.	10	19
Mar.	13	11
Apr.	12	0
Total	87	73

The information for referrals indicates a 16% decrease in this number, as compared to the prior year. We must also keep in mind the population at the K-6 level increased by

over one hundred and fifty students, due in a large part to the attractiveness of the magnet programs. This makes the decrease in this figure even more significant. If children are provided with an atmosphere that is of high interest, it seems they are less likely to experience difficulties that require special education services.

Anytime a district can reduce the special needs population without diminishing services, this translates into a cost savings and higher self-esteem level for those students that avoid classification. The writer had hoped to see a 5% decrease in the referral rate. This would have reversed an upward trend of referrals over the past few years. These results have far exceeded the writer's expectations and bodes well for the future of the magnet programs.

Discussion

The overall success of this practicum must be weighed against the first year implementation and halo effect that is a possibility with all new programs. However, because of the wide spread success over several areas, the results are encouraging to say the least.

We spend much time in education trying to develop enhancements and modifications to existing programs and procedures. Rarely do we completely restructure or radically change a system. At this juncture in our history, the need for change to meet the challenges of our

increasingly diverse student population have never been more apparent. Unfortunately, we have yet to see a commitment beyond rhetoric from the White House. The President's goals for education are surely ambitious, but lack the substantive support necessary to really effect change in school districts.

Given that districts are now facing times were the local taxpayer is being asked to shoulder more of the burden for public education, radical change becomes less likely. Successful radical change may be even less likely still. The writer's school district successfully implemented a schools of choice program, without requiring funds beyond the regular district budget. In fact, in times of economic hardship, the ability to offer all programs in all schools becomes difficult. Magnet schools can allow you to consolidate programs in specialty areas and effectively improve the allocation of limited resources.

Magnet schools have brought many things in their first year. Parents are extremely supportive of the public schools for the first time in years. With the turnout of over 1600 parents for a Magnet Fair, to even greater numbers registering for programs, interest in the public schools has increased. However, with this interest comes increased scrutiny. Fortunately, this scrutiny usually translates into the form of making a good product even better. Parents have volunteered their time to participate in program

planning and have taken great interest in selecting a magnet program for their child (Rossell & Glenn, 1988, Raywid, 1984).

Teacher involvement and enthusiasm is at an all time high. Staff have given many hours of their own time without renumeration, because they have taken ownership of their programs. They want to meet to discuss and improve pedagogy and methodology. They feel the need to grow, and improve their skills, as never before. The challenge for the writer is to maintain this enthusiasm and provide the type of significant training opportunities that will allow programs to flourish. The feeling of professionalism that now permeates the elementary staff is truly remarkable. Magnet programs have provided a once in a lifetime opportunity to become involved and to make a difference. The selection of a new assessment instrument, and the development of a new means of assessment, were just two of many instances during this past year that staff went above and beyond the call of duty for program improvement (Nathan, 1987a, Raywid, 1989).

However, the program was designed for the children. What can we say about the programs and there success in the first year? We see when children are provided with learning opportunities that enhance the school's atmosphere, they are less likely to engage in conflict situations. The lower suspension rate speaks to this directly. However, what one does not get to see is the writer's experience of sitting in

a new elementary science lab and seeing children on the edge of their seats, as they become involved in a hands on science lesson, in a school they selected. Watching children give eight performances of Peter Pan, for over a thousand people, for the first time, after countless hours of rehearsal, demonstrates unparalleled interest in school by these children. These are the intangible benefits that districts can gain through an initiative, such as magnet schools.

If students are truly provided with more diverse learning opportunities, they are less likely to have performance problems that require special education services. This may be due to increased student interest, higher teacher involvement or increased parental support. More than likely, it is a combination of these aspects and others, that led to the lessening of the need for special education services in the district this year.

As you might imagine, the direct academic benefits of this program are an area of great interest to all aspects of the community. Obviously, long term benefits cannot be ascertained as yet. However, the decrease in students in basic skills programs, in the first year of magnet schools, is certainly an encouraging signal. When students are ready to learn, want to learn, and are provided with the proper environment to enhance their educational opportunities,

their chances for success certainly seem to increase (Doyle & Levine, 1983, Nathan, 1987c, Domanico, 1989).

The writer's district is encouraged by the results detailed in this practicum, as they relate to school's of choice, and the promise they hold for education. This type of program can work in any district. The procedures to establish the program will vary from district to district. The commitment and need to change, however, is something that must be established before such a bold endeavor can be successful. Yet, the time and effort seems trivial, once the benefits are examined.

Recommendations

1. Schools of choice, as measured by the successful completion of the objectives of this practicum, can do a great deal to enhance learning opportunities for elementary school children. Therefore, continuing and refining this program over the next few years would benefit students immensely.
2. With the success of the elementary school program, implementation of the program at the middle school level is highly recommended.
3. Choice within a school system can be highly successful and should be used to spur teacher and administrative creativity and involvement.

4. The government's position on choice should be modified or clarified, since its choice model extends beyond city limits and is therefore, more difficult to implement.
5. Funding should be provided at the state level to encourage educational innovation. This funding should include magnet school programs as a proven method to improve the learning environment in a school district.

Dissemination

The work from this practicum will be shared with the superintendent of schools, the district director of guidance services, the director of pupil services, building principals, and elementary guidance staff. Various parts of this practicum will be rewritten for publication in educational journals.

These findings will be included in the board of education general information packet as a part of public information for the town and staff. The writer will also present some of these findings at the New Jersey School Boards Convention. All cluster members will also have abstracts of the practicum for their information and use.

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Appendix

Thursday, October 18, 1990 Franklin Town-Record 3A

School district forms steering committee to implement childhood magnet program

By Jerry De Sarno
News Correspondent

Franklin's school district has announced the creation of a steering committee for the magnet school program and grade level reorganization, which are scheduled to begin in September 1991.

Six planning sub-committees — finance and budget; personnel; student activities and services; program; and communication and facilities — will comprise the steering committee.

Franklin plans to implement magnet school programs in early childhood development, arts education, science and technology and the traditional classics. Latchkey programs also would be available.

Under the magnet school system, faculty and students with similar interests are grouped to create a specialized learning program. Franklin's school district plans to restructure several elementary schools to accommodate a liberal arts program, offering a variety of subjects tailored to the student interests.

Residents, teachers and administrators recently crowded into Franklin High School's cafeteria to listen to and debate the school board's tentative plans to implement the magnet school program.

If a student shows an interest in a subject, whether it is math, music, dance or drama, that student — with his parents' guidance — can choose to attend the magnet school that specializes in that field, Seymor Fliegel, from the Manhattan Institute's Center for Educational Innovation, explained.

The board invited several renowned educators to explain the magnet program concept and share their experiences working with it. The experts said that along with Franklin Township, Atlantic City and Jersey City are also expected to begin a magnet or "choice" school program at elementary levels next year.

According to the administration and experts, the magnet school program will offer more flexibility and diversity of learning for the student who shows a natural interest in a particular subject.

"Most schools are too standardized. We go through life choosing food, clothes, the basic necessities. With the magnet program, both the parent and the student have the choice of what school the student will attend. And if that choice does not work out, the great thing about the program is they can always choose another school," Mr. Fliegel said.

Several parents were concerned about whether or not the new choice program might create segregation of certain racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Adam Scrupski, a professor at the Graduate School Of Education, Rutgers University, said that the magnet program started over 10 years ago and was developed to look into the "white flight" problem ailing the inner city school districts.

"At that time a lot of white middle class families were leaving the inner cities or school districts," Mr. Scrupski said. "The program was developed to attract or retain those family units in the school district by offering competitive educational methods of those in both the urban and private schools."

The administration insisted that none of the proposed magnet schools in the district would succumb to any form of racial segregation.

Several parents at Tuesday's meeting commented that this was the administration's non-militant way of erasing the negativity the school district has been anchored with for almost two decades.

"A lot of friends are hesitant about sending their children to our school district because of all the crime that has been associated within our schools throughout the past years," several parents said.

"If a certain school was attracting only white students, then I would make sure the school had its equal share of minorities in the program," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Dennis J. Clancy, replied.

"I want to attract all races and ethnic backgrounds to our school system," he added.

Other parents and residents further questioned the board's decision to change to a magnet program over the present school system.

"We are not proposing to change all the elementary schools over to the magnet or choice program. Only some will change," Dr. Clancy said.

Dr. Clancy went on to explain that the administration has formed an adhoc committee comprised of teachers, administrators and parents to investigate and analyze the ramifications of the magnet program. All the findings will be disseminated to the public by the appointed steering committee.

Membership on the steering committee is open to the public. Residents who wish to join must call George Dixon, director of the magnet school program, at 873-2400, ext. 200, by Wednesday, Oct. 24.

THE COURIER-NEWS Wednesday, October 10, 1990

'Magnet' program outlined

By KARYN COLOMBO
Courier-News Staff Writer

FRANKLIN (Somerset) — A "magnet" school program slated to be introduced here next year was outlined last night by school officials and experts on the subject.

In a magnet system, schools can concentrate on science and technology, humanities or performing arts, in addition to the usual courses. Alternative teaching styles, such as holding classes in a less restrictive atmosphere, can also be part of the program. Parents and students choose which program they prefer.

Non-magnet schools will continue to operate for those who opt against participating.

"We believe the Franklin proposal is an especially good one," Frank Esposito, one of three experts on magnet schools who will be assisting the district, told about 100 parents.

"I believe in choice in public education," said Seymour Fliegel of the Manhattan Institute — Center for Educational Innovation. "Choice is a very strong catalyst for change."

Fliegel introduced magnet schools in East Harlem in New York City when he was with that district. Ranked last out of New York City's 32 districts in the early 1970s, East Harlem is now ranked about 15th. Magnet schools were established there in the early 1980s.

"If it worked in East Harlem, it can work anywhere," said Carlos Medina, also a former administrator with the East Harlem district who is now with the institute's Center for Educational Innovation.

East Harlem has more than 50 programs in about 20 buildings. The system's level of excellence has attracted non-minority students and students from outside the district, Medina said.

Franklin plans to establish three as-yet-undetermined programs for grades K-8 by September 1991.

Magnet schools operate on the principle that not all children learn the same way and that learning is enhanced when children's interests are encouraged. That can be accomplished by offering a few classes, such as dance or theater, said Superintendent Dennis Clancy.

"If (a student is) happy for one hour, the other five or six hours can only be better," he said.

Parents were encouraged last night to sign up for six committees to study the proposal. A steering committee of district officials, teachers and parents has been established.

Parents also will have an opportunity this fall to answer a questionnaire on magnet schools. Teachers who wish to teach in the magnet system will sign up in December.

EDUCATION

Emphasis on choice, individuality

Drawing parents into the magnet school program

By CHERYL FENSKE
Focus editor

No two snowflakes are exactly the same. Each person's fingerprints are unique.

And no two students learn in the same manner.

It is partly on this last assumption that the Franklin Township Board of Education based its decision to implement a magnet school program in local schools beginning in the 1991-92 school year.

Under the plan adopted by the board, the district would design and implement magnet school programs in early childhood development, arts education, science and technology and traditional classics in at least four of its seven elementary schools. The program would also include a latchkey program as well as a Parent Information Center.

Because approximately 2,000 students in kindergarten through sixth grade will be affected by the initial implementation of elementary magnet school programs and intradistrict choice (a number that will reach over 5,000 when the middle and high school levels are worked into the program in subsequent years), the board held a special presentation on the program at last week's regular meeting.

More than 100 people attended the informational session, which included presentations by consultants from The Manhattan Institute — Center for Educational Innovation.

Dr. Frank Esposito stressed, "There is no one best school suited for everyone. Not all students learn in the same way. We have to provide for those differences."

Magnet schools allow for new opportunities for learning and provide a "better match of student learning needs with diversified student options."

Consultant Carlos Medina added, "We must recognize the greater needs of the variety of students. Parents select the best option for their children within the system. Life is full of choices and choice should be an effective tool within the school system."

Seymour Fliegel relayed his experiences in transforming a New York school district from one of the worst in the city to one of the best — using the concepts of choice and magnet schools.

He, too, emphasized, "There's no school for everybody. There has to be a degree of quality, offering choice and diversity with quality."

Magnet schools are not, he declared, "a panacea" for whatever may be ailing any particular school system. "Will choice fix everything? No. But choice is a very strong catalyst for change," he added.

The concept of having a choice in students' education is integral to the magnet school program. "Choice is a concept of selecting, trying to make the match-up between child and program. Choice works with everything else you do in life; why shouldn't it work with where you send your child to school?" he asked.

> "There is no one best school suited for everyone. Not all students learn in the same way. We have o provide for those differences."
>
> Dr. Frank Esposito

Choice and magnet schools place a greater burden on parents, who must take an active role in the selection process. "With greater autonomy comes greater responsibility," Fliegel said.

In such a program, each child would be placed according to either his or her first, second or third choice of program. The program also allows for flexibility to correct the situation if an incorrect choice is made.

The goal, he noted, is that "teaching and learning become the focus of the school."

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Dennis Clancy told parents in the audience that, under Franklin Township's magnet schools plan, not all schools will be magnet schools, although magnet schools will be available. "We will offer options to parents. You do not have to take the options," he pointed out.

Using the example of a young girl who likes dance and is enrolled in the magnet school of fine arts, Clancy explained the theory that "if she's happy for one hour, the other five or six hours of the day will be better."

The Board of Education has decided to implement magnet schools beginning at the elementary school level because, as Clancy said, of the need for a good foundation.

Community members sought for committees

The Franklin Township Public Schools have announced the creation of a steering committee for the Magnet School Program and Grade Level Reorganization scheduled to begin in the fall of 1991.

Six planning committees have been established and are available to encourage community involvement and help prepare the tasks for implementing magnet school programs in the district.

The six planning committees include the following areas:

- Finance and Budget
- Personnel
- Student Activities/Services
- Program
- Communication/Dissemination
- Facilities

The committees are open to all interested members of the public who are committed to assisting the district to move forward and progressively enhance the school district's goals toward the magnet school program.

Interested community residents should call George Dixon, director of the Magnet School Program, at 873-2400, ext. 200.

Those community members interested should call before Oct. 24.

Franklin Township's Magnet Schools

By Judith Thomas

The more a kid enjoys being in school, the more he's going to learn." This idea, put forth by Charlette Weisner, principal of Franklin Township's Elizabeth Avenue Elementary School, is one of the reasons that this school system has embarked on an entirely new program in its elementary schools.

In the fall of 1989, in response to a desire to improve the quality of education in the township, the school board, PTO and teachers of Franklin Township in Somerset County met to discuss possibilities. From those early discussions came the decision to go to a magnet school format, in which specialized programs are offered, and parents and students have choices. Students in magnet programs attend the school in their district which offers the program they want, rather than attending the school closest to them.

"Magnet programs are truly just the basics with a little bit of a twist," says Marylou Lewis, president of the Pine Grove Manor PTA. "We're not trying to make the kids into nuclear scientists or Baryshnikovs," she continues. Bill Grippo, director of Public Affairs for the township emphasizes, "This is not a commitment to a career goal. It's simply an exposure to an area of interest, where the magnet theme creates excitement." Excitement is evidently what parents and students are feeling, because almost eighty percent of the Kindergarten-through-sixth grade students are enrolled in the fledgling program, and more than 150 students previously enrolled in private or parochial schools have returned to public schools.

Magnet schools are not new. The impetus which sparked the spread of magnet schools in the early 1970s was not educational excellence, but an alternative to mandatory busing to accomplish school desegregation. The theory was that specialized programs would attract racially diverse students to schools which would have been attended primarily by a single ethnic group if students had been drawn from neighborhood children.

Franklin Township is a racially diverse community. Bill Grippo, director of Contunuing Education and Public Affairs for Franklin Township describes the schools as "a mini-United Nations—we have 46 different native languages among students in our system." But it was not desegregation which was the motivation for the magnet school program here—it was the demand for educational excellence.

Instead of offering every student a standardized curriculum, magnet schools offer diverse programs which teach the basics, but also allow students to learn in an atmosphere which takes into account individual interests. In addition, teachers have a greater say in the running of the programs, which pays big dividends. It taps a deep reservoir of imaginative instructional ideas, and increases the teachers' stake in their school's success. Most teachers in Franklin Township worked over the summer, developing their curricula, equipping their own classrooms, and attending special inservice days. Phil Chalupa, principal of the Conerly Road School was thrilled by the response of his teachers. "I saw members of my staff coming to work on their classrooms on their days off. I've never seen them so excited," he says.

"We decided to change st add more enrichment programs," says Dr. Dennis Clancy, Franklin Township Superintendent of Schools. "We wanted students —and their parents —to be excited about education, and excited about what our schools could offer."

After the initial meeting in 1989, the school system had to convince the community that this was

ter, and there is regular instruction by subject specialists in computer studies. An invention convention, field study, research and experimentation and computer and telecommunication networking are intended to give students in this program opportunities to develop postive self-esteem, appreciation of natural interrelationships, logical thinking and technological skills.

Over 600 students chose the fine, visual, and performing arts magnet. The emphasis here is on building strong academic skills while broadening an appreciation of the arts and developing an ability to communicate. The curriculum is enhanced by intensive instruction and increased learning opportunities in music, creative writing, drama, visual arts, gymnastics, dance and public speaking. Students use the facilities at the Villagers Barn Theatre for theater components of the program.

Mark Hopkins, director of the Villagers Barn Theatre, compares the program to programs run by the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, which instill a love of theater into children at an early age. He emphasizes that the performing arts keep children more focused, and away from drugs and other dangers. "People neglect to see the arts as a means for self expression and control," Hopkins says. "Children are looking for a way to control their environment. Those involved in the arts have more positive ways of doing this."

The International Studies program gives a multicultural, global perspective to the study of core curriculum areas. Geography, foreign languages, government, economics and the future of United States in the international community are explored. Classrooms are filled with maps and globes, and current events are eagerly discussed. Special events give children a chance to experience the culture of other nations by introducing them to the food, dress, artwork and culture of other parts of the world.

"I think we should have had this years ago," said Edna Lemiska, parent, and food services director for the district, whose daughter Sabrina is in the international magnet program. "Students are going to touch base with a lot of other cultures," she continues. "If we all knew a little more about other people's cultures, there would be less misunderstandings," Lemiska adds.

The Academy program offers a highly structured and disciplined setting for students who are most comfortable in a competitive environment. They must conform to strict regulations for academic studies, behavior, attendance, dress, and homework. Independent study is emphasized, and research and written reports are essential elements of assignments. The curriculum stresses the fundamentals of reading, mathematics, English, penmanship, geography, spelling and science, enriched by great literature, logic and philosophy, and introduces the study of Latin and arts appreciation. Spelling and geography bees, debates, math olympics and academic decathlons provide opportunities to demonstrate knowledge through positive competition at the school, district and state levels.

The four programs already discussed are available for grades K-6. The only program available only to the little guys (K-3) is, appropriately, the Early Childhood program, which provides a non-graded, individual approach in which children learn to explore the world, enjoy books, solve problems and get along with peers. Students and instructional teams of two or more teachers work together for at least two years. There is an emphasis on building self-confidence, so that students are willing to experiment and try new and more difficult tasks without the fear of failure. It's a positive, supportive learning environment that nurtures a love of learning.

The programs have been up and running for over two months now, and the response from parents, teacher and students alike is exciting. Tedi DeVries, vice-president of the Board of Educations reports that "not in 26 years have I seen parents this thrilled with the learning opportunities that are there for their kids." Elizabeth Avenue School PTO president Merilee Scilla reports the first meeting was attended by over 100 people—up from a usual attendance of about 30. Sharon Potter, president of Hillcrest PTO agrees. "We've had very heavy volunteerism. The parents are really excited." Students are equally enthusiastic. Philip Chaiupa says "The enthusiasm is just remarkable. Everyone is excited to come to school each day." It looks like Hofstra professor Dr. Mary Ann Raywid is right when she says "Choice programs are good for parents, children, teachers and schools." □

the best plan for Franklin Township's schools. They began a community education program which was capped last spring with a Magnet Fair—a three-day program, to which all parents of elementary school children were invited. The response was overwhelming. There are approximately 2,500 children of K-6 age in Franklin Township, and 3,200 parents showed up. They were treated to displays, a discussion of magnet schools in general, examples of the programs which would be offered, mock-classroom set-ups and actual model classes. Grippo says that this one event turned the community on to the advantages of magnet schools.

The programs offered were developed by teams selected from teacher applicants based on the specialized areas suggested by parents in initial meetings. The teachers involved participated in training programs and curriculum development activities andvisited magnet school programs in other school districts (Franklin Township is the seventh district in New Jersey to implement a magnet program. Other districts with magnet programs are Atlantic City, Bayonne, Elizabeth, Montclair, Neptune Township and Teaneck.)

Franklin Township Schools are currently offering five magnet programs at the K-3 level, and four at the 4-6 level, in addition to the traditional program. Six of the seven elementary schools in the district have magnet programs (the Kingston School, withan enrollment of only 60 in grades K-3, offers only the traditional program).

Almost a third of all elementary students chose the science and technology magnet, which is offered at two schools at the K-3 level and one school at the 4-6 level. The learning environment for this program is a combination of classroom, laboratory, museum, weather station and zoo. Students are encouraged to explore their world by learning scientific methods. Observation, discovery, inquiry and problem-solving become the vehicles for the study of environmental education, structural design, robotics, alternative energy sources, transportation, health and medical fields, and future planning.

Students enrolled in the Science and Technology magnet program also ustilize the newly opened township-based Bunker Hill environmental cen-

Arts program: using theater as a means of self expression

By Kerry Dooley
Staff Writer

Bringing children from the fine, visual and performing arts magnets to the Villagers Barn Theatre for classes may have benefits for all of Franklin.

"I hope the community appreciates the impact that the magnet program can have," said Mark Hopkins, the director of the Villagers Barn Theatre. "It's going to help the arts in this area."

He compared the school district's use of the Villagers Barn Theatre to programs run by the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. The Minnesota children fall in love with theater at an early age and return to the Guthrie as playgoers and patrons after they've grown up, according to Mr. Hopkins. He hopes that the magnet programs in the Villagers Barn Theatre will have the same results.

"It's almost like building an audience years and years in advance," Mr. Hopkins said.

When the Township Council granted its approval to the school district's lease to rent the theater for five years — for a total of $270,000 — Mr. Hopkins told the council, "I'm looking forward to having children running through the building."

Usually, Mr. Hopkins is the only one in the eerily quiet theater during the day. This summer, with the magnet schools scheduled to open in September, the theater tried an idea that member Janet Cantore-Watson had been proposing for years. *The theater stands empty during the day, so why not offer classes for children?* Three sessions of the theater training programs ran this summer and were quite a success, Mr. Hopkins said.

The performing arts can also keep children more focused and away from drugs and other dangers, according to Mr. Hopkins.

"People neglect to see the arts as a means for self expression and control," he said. "People take short cuts or a route that looks easier.

"When children go astray and are attracted to the trappings, to drugs, to guns, to clothes, they are looking for a way to control their environment," he said. Children who are involved with the arts have more positive ways of doing this, he said.

"A child who can't express himself can express himself through the arts," Mr. Hopkins said.

Mr. Hopkins also tapped into one of the school district's goals behind the magnet schools. By using a part of the curriculum that children enjoy as a starting point, many other subjects can come into play and become more real to the students, he said.

Mr. Hopkins gave the example of asking students who are painting a flat for a stage production to figure out how many gallons of paint they will need for the project.

"You can teach English through the arts, you can even teach math through the arts," he said.

Marc Ascher/The Home N

Student teacher Fern Wolkin works with first-graders reading in the Early Childhood Development class. From left are students: Vincent Caristo, Emily Linthe, Tyler Scudder, Juliane Eaton, Kyle Bibby and Amanada Rossi.

Early learning made fun, instructiv

By STEVE M. KLEIN
Home News staff writer

FRANKLIN — It was the eve of Halloween, a perfect day for pumpkins and math in Anita Ventantonio's first-grade early childhood magnet class at MacAfee Road School.

Eyeing the big orange vegetable sitting on a table at the front of the room, the 19 students estimated its weight and wrote their guesses on slips of paper, not unlike a scene out of the game show 'Jeopardy.'

Shouts of "Too much!" and "Too little!" echoed throughout the classroom as student teacher Fern Wolkin read aloud each answer. Although no student guessed its weight exactly, the pumpkin served its purpose.

"You involve the children in the learning process," Ventantonio said. "You could just carve the pumpkin and use it for the Halloween party, but by making them guess the weight, it becomes a math lesson for them."

The early childhood magnet program is offered in kindergarten through second grade at MacAfee Road, Pine Grove Manor and Elizabeth Avenue schools. Enrollment is 326.

The program stresses a nurturing environment in which students receive identical lessons, but are allowed to progress at their own pace. Students in Ventantonio's class, for example, draw up contracts each day outlining their assignments. Because the program emphasizes a close relationship between student and teacher, first-graders will retain the same instructor in second grade.

"Children don't all learn in the same way," Ventantonio said. "Instead of making the child fit the curriculum, you make the curriculum fit the child."

To achieve that goal, each early childhood classroom has been equipped with numerous learning centers. When students finish classroom lessons, they go to a center to work on art projects, to read books, to write stories, or to measure objects for math drills.

Students do not always work alone in the centers. When they hit a snag, they cons their peers working on a similar lesson

"It teaches them to work together." s MacAfee Principal Thomas DelCasale. this world, that's important because need to learn to cooperate to get posit things done."

Kindergarten students receive an adc benefit — a longer school day, whic lows them to attend more special class They now spend four hours in school ea day rather than two-and-a-half as in p vious years.

"It (the longer day) gives us a solid blc of time to do creative work," said teach Barbara Bergman. "They also get to the computer and science labs, all things the older kids do."

Although the special activities of the p gram allow students greater freedom movement, that privilege has resulted fewer, not more, discipline proble teachers said.

"It's stimulating to the kids," DelCas said. "This has the potential to become program of the future for young childre

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MAGNETS AT A GLANCE

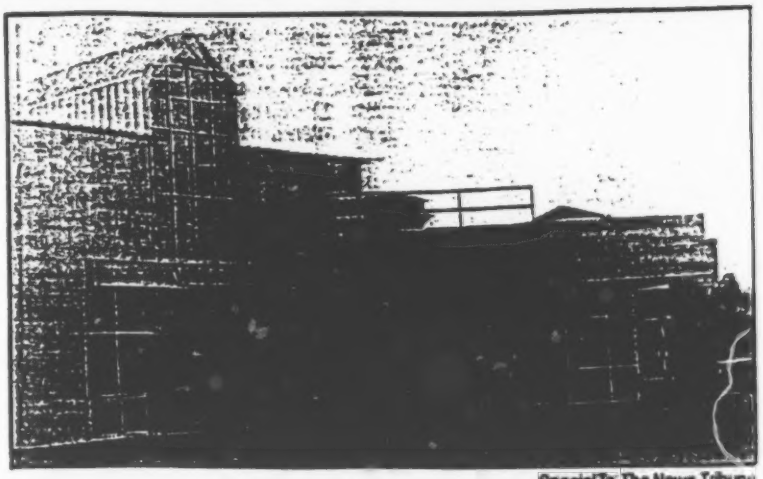
Students enrolled in Franklin's magnet school programs will continue to receive instruction in a core curriculum that includes math, science, reading, language arts, and social studies, as well as art, music, and physical education. Students also have the option to remain in a traditional curriculum with no magnet programs.

Following are Franklin's magnet programs:

■ **Academy** — Offers a highly structured and disciplined setting the stresses the fundamentals of reading, math, English, penmanship, history, geography, spelling, and science. Provides a classical perspective enriched by literature, logic and philosophy, Latin, and arts appreciation.

■ **Early childhood education** — Available through the second grade. Provides an environment where optimum, age-appropriate learning can take place. Students and instructional teams of at least two teachers will work together for at least two years, with parental involvement strongly encouraged. Within a non-graded, individual approach, children will learn to enjoy books, explore the world around them, solve problems, and get along with peers.

■ **Fine, visual, and performing arts** — For students who want to build strong academic skills while broadening their appreciation of the arts and developing their ability to communicate. The learning environment will be enhanced by instruction in instrumental and vocal music, creative writing, drama, visual arts, gymnastics, dance, and public speaking. The program will also use the resources of the township-based Villagers Barn Theatre.



Special To The News Tribune

The fine arts program will use the resources of the newly renovated Villagers Barn Theatre.

■ **International studies** — Offers a global perspective in areas such as world geography, foreign languages, government, economics, and the historical and future role of the United States in the international community. A student government and world court concept will guide students in their studies and promote dialogue among students of all levels.

■ **Science and technology** — Will include study of environmental education, robotics, energy sources, health, and medicine. The school learning environment will be a combination classroom, laboratory, museum, weather station, and zoo. Use of the township-based Bunker Hill Environmental Center will be incorporated into the curriculum. Computers and telecommunications networking will provide opportunities to build self-esteem and develop logical thinking and technical skills.

The Courier-News

Serving Central New Jersey | Bridgewater, Monday, April 15, 1991 | 722-8

Education plan includes some far-reaching ideas

WASHINGTON (AP) — After barely a month on the job, Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander has gotten President Bush's backing for a far-reaching package of reforms that include national student tests and experiments with radically new ways of running schools.

Bush, who pledged during his 1988 campaign to be the "education president," will unveil the school reform package at the White House on Thursday after a luncheon with governors, an administration official said yesterday.

The fast-track initiative will embrace some of the same education themes that Bush and former President Reagan have sounded before: expanding parental choice in education and improving literacy and job-training programs for dropouts, displaced workers and other adults.

But it will also put Bush's stamp — and Alexander's — on some radically new ideas, including pressing ahead to develop a type of national student testing program, as a presidential advisory panel recently recommended.

Alexander is a former governor of Tennessee who was president of the University of Tennessee when Bush nominated him Dec. 17 to succeed Laura F. Cavazos.

He won Bush's backing for his reform ideas within days of his March 18 swearing-in, said chief Education Department spokeswoman Etta Fielek.

Alexander has cleaned house at the Education Department and hired David Kearns, a former chairman of Xerox Corp., as his deputy secretary.

The reform package is still evolving, Fielek said.

"It is very complicated. It will not bring results overnight," she said. "But it will bring issues to the table."

> 'There are four broad themes: better schools for the kids in school now; new schools for the students of the future; back to school for the adults; and then "the other 91 percent."
>
> Etta Fielek, spokeswoman, U.S. Education Department

The package is intended as a blueprint to help implement the ambitious but broad education goals that Bush and the nation's governors set after an education summit in Charlottesville, Va., in September 1989.

Those goals include ridding schools of drugs and violence, drastically reducing the dropout rate, and making American youth the best in the world in math and science by the year 2000.

The New York Times, in a report yesterday, said Bush would propose several hundred million dollars in new spending, primarily on grants to spur innovations that would include "A new generation of American schools" to try longer school days or years and other new education approaches. Some schools may be operated by private industry, according to an unnamed official cited by the newspaper.

"There are four broad themes: better schools for the kids in school now; new schools for the students of the future; back to school for the adults; and then 'the other 91 percent,'" said Fielek.

"The other 91 percent" is a phrase coined by Chester A. Finn Jr., a Vanderbilt University professor and former Education Department research chief. It refers to the fact that youths spend only 9 percent of their lives in the classroom by the time they graduate from high school.

Bush will seek to improve classroom performance by bolstering that other 91 percent of their lives, Fielek said. Under that umbrella will fall such items as improving child nutrition and helping parents improve their skills in tutoring their own children.

National testing was once anathema to most education groups, rejected out of hand by teachers, administrators and superintendents alike.

The federal government plays a major role in funding remedial education for the poor and special education for the handicapped, but it doesn't set the public-school curriculum. That falls to state and local control.

But in the mid-1980s, amid widespread dissatisfaction with students' performance on college entrance tests and in international scholastic exams, state superintendents agreed to expand the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a federally sponsored program that tests a cross-section of U.S. pupils in various subjects. Some states now piggyback their own tests on NAEP exams.

In February, the president's education policy advisory committee strongly recommended that Bush consider a national testing program.

Fielek said Alexander was not in favor of a sole test that all schoolchildren would have to pass.

"He feels we're too diverse a nation to have any single test," she said.

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Magnet schools in Franklin Twp. called success

By CARRIE STETLER

Franklin Township's new magnet chool program appears to be exceed-ıg the expectations of everyone in-olved after the first week of school.

Teachers, students and adminis-rators gave the program glowing re-iews, and parents from eight neigh-oring districts have called, hoping to et their children enrolled, said district pokesman Bill Grippo.

"People are really chomping at he bit to get in," he said. "It's a new lay in the history of Franklin Town-hip."

Of the district's approximately :,500 K-6 children, only 340 are en-olled in the traditional curriculum ısed last year, according to school fig-ıres, which do not include special edu-ation classes.

Magnet schools emphasize a par-icular subject or style of teaching, al-hough children learn the same basic skills no matter which one they attend.

Franklin Township has five pro-grams: early childhood, in which chil-ıren have the same teacher from kin-lergarten until third grade; science and :ecnnology; the arts; international stud-.es, and an academy program, in which children follow a dress code and learn Latin and other classical subjects.

The science and arts programs are the most popular, with 611 children en-rolled in the arts and 806 attending the science and technology magnet, which overlaps with the early childhood pro-gram in the Elizabeth Avenue School.

The theory behind magnet schools is that children pay more attention to all of their lessons because the mag-net's main subject is incorporated into every area of study, from reading to math.

A walk through the halls of each magnet immediately conveys the school's focus. Reproductions of paint-ings and photographs of artists and dancers line the walls of Conerly Road School, where the performing arts pro-gram is based for grades 4-6.

The international studies program, with 67 students, is also at the school. Kendra Ferrari's sixth-grade classroom is filled with maps, globes and talk of current events. This week, children in the international studies program will start their Spanish unit.

"We already learned about Saudi Arabia," said Kieri Young.

His classmate, Jason Enlow, is anxious to find out about Nigeria. His face beamed as he explained why he was enrolled at Conerly.

"I love social studies," he said.

At Elizabeth Avenue School, an early childhood and K-3 science mag-net, the resource room is lined with "Lego Dactic" kits that children will use to explore the principles of ma-chinery. Two large fish tanks will soon be filled with fresh water and salt water fish.

"There's so much excitement, so much concentration and so much want-ing to do," said instructor Mary Mur-dock, who taught gifted and talented children last year.

"If a child is interested in a sub-ject, they learn better and they learn more quickly," she observed. "They say, 'I love coming to your science classroom; I love coming here.'

"Before, you were confined to a certain amount of minutes for each subject . .| but these kids can sit there and listen to history forever," Ferrari said.

Children at the magnet schools leave their regular classrooms at least once every six days for a special mag-net-centered activity.

Science and technology students visit the school resource rooms. Per-forming arts students are bused to the Franklin Villagers Barn Theater, where they take dance, gymnastics and drama classes. International studies children also take classes there, said Philip Cha-lupa, Conerly School principal.

Students at Conerly also take music lessons on a computer piano key-board twice a week, he said. During their regular classes, they use the mag-net activities to help with their other lessons. For instance, performing arts students will write scripts for their own plays, said drama teacher Phyllis Am-brose.

She said one of the benefits of the arts magnet is that it helps children de-velop confidence and self-expression.

"I've met one mother whose son has difficulty communicating and she was so pleased this is being offered."

A key to the magnet programs success is that teachers develop the curricula themselves, officials said. Most worked over the summer, equip-ping classrooms on their own time, planning lessons and attending specia in-service days.

"I did a lot of studying of differen countries and cultures," said Ferrari.

Staff members and students alike agreed that the atmosphere in the dis-trict is much different this year.

"The enthusiasm is just remark-able," said Chalupa. "Everyone is excit-ed to come to school each day."

Photo by Steve Andrascik

Mary Murdock, a teacher at Elizabeth Avenue School, talks to her third-graders attending Franklin Twp.'s popular science and technology magnet program

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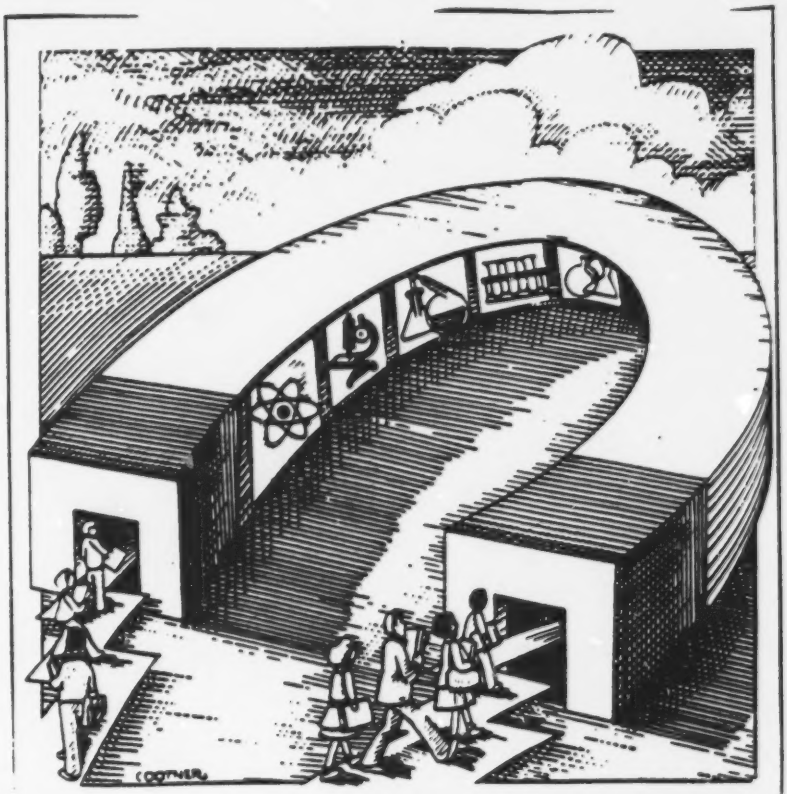

Bernie Cootner/Newsday

Magnet school program serves as a shining example

My son is a fourth-grader in the science and technology magnet program at Hillcrest School in Franklin. My wife and I recently had our first look at how the magnet approach is working.

We could not have been more impressed. From the spanking-new Macintosh color personal computers to the sophisticated microscopes and the ambitious plans for field trips, we were somewhat overwhelmed by the scope of change magnets have brought.

Beyond that, we picked up the excitement of the teaching professionals. They couldn't suppress their enthusiasm for teaching our kids in a new and very exciting way. Sort of a professional rebirth is taking place.

And their enthusiasm is felt by our kids. My son comes home enthralled by the world of new possibilities all around him. Magnet schools are working thanks to the vision of the school board, principals and teachers who are making it all happen.

School boards in districts throughout Middlesex and Somerset counties should keep a close eye on the educational reformation taking place in Franklin Township.

KEN CAPUTO
Somerset

LOCAL

Franklin's school magnet system, entering its 2nd year, is expanded

By KARYN COLOMBO
Courier-News Staff Writer

FRANKLIN (Somerset) — Franklin's elementary magnets will change slightly at the kindergarten-grade 6 level and expand into the Sampson G. Smith Intermediate School when the district begins its second year of offering school choice programs this fall.

Most pupils already have registered for the magnet programs for the 1992-93 academic year, district spokesman Bill Grippo said. Science and Technology remains the most popular choice, he said.

Franklin began offering magnet programs in six of the district's seven elementary schools last fall, offering parents a choice of a school tailored to their child's interest.

The district offered programs in Science and Technology; Fine, Visual and Performing Arts; International Studies; Academy; and Early Childhood. Traditional programs also were available.

Grippo said that children in the seventh and eighth grades at the middle school now will have the opportunity to boost their core curriculum with classes that concentrate on Science and Technology; Fine, Visual and Performing Arts; Classical Humanities; and International Studies.

Students chose their middle school magnets with the help of guidance counselors.

Sampson also will get 100 sixth-graders from Conerly Road School, who will participate in the Fine, Visual and Performing Arts magnet. The move of the sixth-graders was needed to free up space in Pine Grove Manor School by providing space for that school's third-graders at Conerly.

> 'I think it was a very exciting program for teachers and children. It worked out rather well.'
>
> **Thomas DelCasale, retiring MacAfee principal**

The rest of the district's sixth-graders are expected to move into Sampson G. Smith School in September 1993, when an addition is completed.

For the district's elementary schools, the changes are as follows:

■ Hillcrest School will continue as a Science and Technology magnet for grades 4, 5 and 6. Building reorganization will give the school two more classrooms, for the fourth and fifth grades, said Linda Beyea, the principal.

"We've shown a lot of growth," Beyea said. "All students who selected the program grew in the program."

Hillcrest is one of 16 schools in New Jersey chosen to compete in the national competition for Redbook magazine's America's Best Schools contest.

■ Conerly Road School will go from a grade 4-6 school to a grade 3-5 school, but will continue to offer Fine, Visual and Performing Arts. It will no longer house the International Studies magnet.

■ Franklin Park School will offer an academy for International Studies magnet for grades 4-6. The magnet is a merging of the Academy magnet, which was offered exclusively at Franklin Park in the 1991-1992 school year, and the International Studies magnet, which was offered exclusively at Conerly last year.

■ Kingston, which last year offered only a traditional curriculum, will offer the Academy for International Studies for grades kindergarten-2, Grippo said.

■ MacAfee Road School will continue to offer the Science and Technology magnet for grades kindergarten-3 and Early Childhood for grades kindergarten-2.

■ Pine Grove Manor School will offer the Fine, Visual and Performing Arts magnet for grades kindergarten-2 instead of kindergarten-3, as it did last year. A traditional kindergarten also will be offered.

■ Elizabeth Avenue School remains as a Science and Technology magnet for grades kindergarten-3 and Early Childhood for grades kindergarten-2.

Beyea and Conerly principal Phil Chalupa both said they saw a noticeable increase in parental involvement in the schools.

"I think it was a very exciting program for teachers and children," said Thomas DelCasale, who retired recently as principal at MacAfee. "It worked out rather well."

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COUNTY), NEW JERSEY

STAFF INSERVICE JUNE 19 - 27, 1991

June 19 - 21

Early Childhood - 3 day inservice
a) Dr. Rutgers University - Early Childhood Specialist
b) Program components, scheduling, etc.

Science & Technology - 3 day inservice
a) Dr. New Jersey Commission on Technology - Technology training for K-6 programs
b) Program components, scheduling, etc.

Fine, Visual and Performing Arts/International Studies - 2 day inservice -
a) Tour of off-site facilities and their use in the program
b) Magnet Fair Presentation
c) Cooperative learning inservice training
d) Learning styles inservice training
e) Arts infusion possibilities - Brainstorming session

Academy - 2 day inservice
a) Whole language training -
b) Program philosophy, scheduling and instructional activities
c) Inservice training geography - Rand McNally
d) Program objectives, scheduling and school activities

Traditional - 2 day inservice
a) Instructional Theory into Practice - Mrs. Professional Dynamics - formerly lead trainer Academy for the Advancement of Teaching
b) Program schedule

June 24 - 25

Summer Reading Workshop

A two day workshop will be held at the School Library. The day will be six hours in length, with a half-hour break for lunch. The areas we will be discussing are: the literature reading program, classroom management techniques, whole language, and cooperative learning.

June 24 - 27

Summer Computer Workshops

Four specially designed workshops will be conducted this summer to introduce the staff to the computers they will be using this fall. We encourage all teachers and principals to attend one of the workshops and to take home a computer for the entire summer.

Title:	Computers in the Classroom (1)
Dates:	June 25, 26, 1991
Audience:	2nd & 3rd Grade Teachers
Description:	Computer Logistics: setting up the system, formatting disks, file management, getting the most out of two computers and 25 students. Appleworks: An Introduction.

Title:	Computers in the Classroom (2)
Dates:	June 27, 1991
Audience:	Teachers
Description:	Computer Logistics: setting up the computer, file management, using the computer with 25 students, trouble shooting computer and printer problems.

Title:	Introduction to Macs and Microsoft Works (3)
Dates:	June 26, 27, 1991
Audience:	Staff
Description:	Logistics: Introduction to Macs and Microsoft Word

Title:	Introduction to Macs and Microsoft Works (4)
Dates:	June 24, 25, 1991
Audience:	K-3 Staffs
Description:	Introduction to Macs; creating the first documents

MAGNET SCHOOL PROGRAMS — 1991-1992

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES — ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

SCHOOL	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
	Piano Lab	bid awarded
	Musical Instruments	bid awarded
	Classroom Computers, Grades 2-3	complete for Sept.
	Gymnastics Equipment	bid awarded
	Early Childhood Supplies & Equipment	allocation complete
	Multimedia Station	order placed
	Playground Equipment	under design
	Classroom Computer Set-up, All Classes	complete for Sept.
	Geography Supplies & Equipment	partial order
	Multimedia Center	order placed
	Piano Lab	bid awarded
	Musical Instruments	bid awarded
	Classroom Computers, Grades 4-6	complete for Sept.
	Gymnastics Equipment	bid awarded
	Multimedia Station	order placed
	Geography Classroom Supplies	final order not placed
	Mac Computer Lab	ordered
	Science Lab	
	Multimedia Station	order placed
	Early Childhood Supplies & Equipment	partial order
	Classroom Computers, Grades 2-3	
	Computer Lab	delivered
	Science Lab	order placed
	Early Childhood Supplies & Equipment	order placed
	Multimedia Station	order placed
	Computer Lab	delivered
	(Life) Science Lab	waiting for pricing
	(Biology) Science Lab	waiting for pricing
	Technology Lab	waiting for pricing (computers placed)
	Multimedia Station	order placed

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Specific Component	Staff	Coordinators (Superv./Admin.)
Science & Technology		
Science Lab, K-3		
Computers, K-3	Specialist	
Tech. Unit	Spec./	
Sci. Lab-Biology		
Sci. Lab-Life Science	Specialist	
Science Environmental	Specialist	
Arts		
Drama	Specialist	
Dance		
Gymnastics		
Suzuki		
Foreign Languages	Specialist	
Piano Lab		
Academy		
Latin	Specialist	
Geography	Program Staff	
International Studies		
Foreign Language	Specialist	
Early Childhood		
All Activities	Staff	

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DIVISION OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: , Principal,

Principal,
School

Principal,
School

FROM: Robert J. Rosado, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

SUBJECT: Enrichment Program

DATE: September 19, 1991

Attached you will find a list of characteristics you can share with teachers in defining our initial pool of enrichment students for the up-coming school year.

Again, I would strongly suggest, particularly at the K-3 level, that each teacher nominate anywhere from three to five students from their class for the enrichment program. This will keep the numbers manageable and truly give us a group of students who would benefit from the enrichment science/technology/computers program. Once these students have been nominated, you will know from your contact with them if there is any problem with the nomination. Therefore, the final selection for the program, as was the case last year, should be determined by the building principal.

I will forward a form to you in a few days that you can use to record names of students enrolled. One copy of the form should be forwarded to my office and one copy kept for your files.

RJR:dp
pc: Subject Specialists
Attach.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DIVISION OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Gymnastics Teacher
School

Gymnastics Teacher
School

Dance Teacher
School

, Dance Teacher
School

FROM: Robert J. Rosado, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

SUBJECT: Meeting

DATE: July 29, 1991

I would like to meet with you on Monday, August 5, 1991 at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. The meeting will be short -- less than one hour. The purpose will be to outline the curriculum and program goals for dance and gymnastics, and to have you meet with each other as a group for the first time.

If you cannot attend, please call my secretary, at (908) 873-2400 and let her know.

RJR:dp

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FALL 1991

Tentative activities for fourth through sixth grade students at Hillcrest School for the Technology Education classes.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

1. Free form Lego use. It is to include following activity cards and student's imagination.

2. Begin Control Technology by way of Lego logo and the following activities:

a. traffic light
b. merry go round
c. controlled machinery
d. motorized car
e. smart car
f. turtle activities
g. personal projects which combines ideas learned from 2a-f.

3. Mini-Invention Contest which includes introduction to drafting and hand-tool use. It will also include simple electrical wiring which may include bells, buzzers, lights, sensors - all depending upon the student's invention.

4. Rocketry which includes design, construction and flight prediction (using software) of individualized project.

5. (If time allows) design and construction of a motorized vehicle. The student will model his/her vehicle from clay and predict its performance by way of software. Construction of the vehicle will involve hand-tool use, safety skills, Radio Shack's battery packs, controls, Pitsco gears, motors and wheels. A race will culminate this activity.

REGULAR AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

1. Soap box derby using Legos and/or Fischer Technik kits - but no motors to race student's vehicles down a ramp.

2. Crazy contraption problem solving activity with the use of Lego and/or Fischer Technik kits.

3. Bridge building competition. First, the students will use paper, then straws, and finally a combination of ice-cream sticks, 1/4" square dowels, glue, tape, paper, and cardboard.

4. Basic electrical wiring to make bells, buzzers and lights work. Also wiring to make a combination of the three work. This can include extra parts from various Graymark electrical kits, to add mikes, speakers, volume controls and sound producers.

5. Mini-Invention Contest following format of Enrichment's # 3.

6. Free form Lego and Fischer Technik use. This can be done with use of activity cards and the student's imagination.

7. Rocketry, if time allows for it in the spring.

School

Memorandum

TO: R. Rosado, Asst. Superintendent

FROM: Principal

RE: Academically Talented After School Program

DATE: October 28, 1991

In response to your memo dated 9/20/91, attached please find names of pupils and activity outline for Science for the first semester 10/15 - 12/17/91.

An outline for computer activities for the second semester will follow.

TD:mbn
Attachment

MEMO TO: Kindergarten Teachers

FROM: Director
Reading/LA/Media

Director
Math/Computer Applications

SUBJECT: Kindergarten Assessment Committee

DATE: 1/10/92

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for this committee. Our first meeting will be held.....

-Thursday, January 23, 1992
-Conference Room, Administration Bldg.
-2:45 - 4:00 PM

Our initial discussion will focus on the task of developing a suitable instrument for 1992 Spring assessment of our kindergarten students in reading, language and math. Please bring with you any models that might be helpful in this process to be reviewed with others that have been collected.

If you are unable to attend, please call Ext. 306/7.

nm/fc
jvd
c: R. Rosado

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Kindergarten, K-3 B.S.I.P. Teachers, K-6 Speech Therapists, 4-6 Guidance Counselors, K-3 E.S.L. Bilingual Teachers

FROM: Robert J. Rosado

RE: Training for Kindergarten Assessment

DATE: Feb. 24, 1992

In discussions held over the past month with your respective supervisors, we have sought to determine what would be the most effective way to test kindergarten students this April. As you may or may not recall, we will no longer be using a standardized group testing instrument as in previous years. This years assessment will be on a one to one basis. All students will be tested during the April testing week with the new individualized assessment instrument. In order to insure that all students will be tested during this week, we will need to train a large group of staff to assist at the various K-3 sites.
Mrs. Mason will conduct a training workshop for use of these assessment materials on Tuesday, March 10th in the central office auditorium from 2:45 to 4:45. Reimbursement will be at the standard rate of pay. If you are unable to attend, please contact your immediate supervisor. Your participation in this process will be critical to the success of our kindergarten students. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation.

cc.

K-6 Principals

MAGNET SCHOOL SURVEY RESULTS

FIRST CHOICE	No. of Students*
EARLY CHILDHOOD	256
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	243
FINE & VISUAL ARTS	135
ACADEMY	130
INTER. STUDIES	28
1st & 2nd CHOICES	
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	477
FINE & VISUAL ARTS	324
EARLY CHILDHOOD	320
ACADEMY	273
INTER. STUDIES	84

*OUT OF 873

"Planning is crucial. We have to follow a certain sequence. We have not been hasty. We are avoiding a lot of pitfalls by going through this recommended procedure."